

THE
L I F E
OF
THOMAS CHATTERTON,
WITH
CRITICISMS
ON HIS
GENIUS AND WRITINGS,
AND
A CONCISE VIEW
OF THE
CONTROVERSY
CONCERNING
ROWLEY'S POEMS.

By G. GREGORY, D.D. F.A.S.
AUTHOR OF ESSAYS HISTORICAL AND MORAL, &c.

Agora com pobreza aborrecida,
Por hospícios alheos degradado;
Agora da esperança já adquirida,
De novo mais que nunca derribado.

CAMOENS.

LONDON.
PRINTED FOR G. KEARSLEY, No. 46, FLEET STREET.
1789.

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THOMAS HATTERTON

CRISTMAS

AND

A



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There are two classes of the world, those
who are in the position of the master, and those
who are in the position of the servant. The
first class are the few, and the second class
are the many. The first class are the
rich, and the second class are the poor.
The first class are the few, and the second
class are the many. The first class are
the rich, and the second class are the poor.



There are two classes of the world, those
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first class are the few, and the second class
are the many. The first class are the
rich, and the second class are the poor.
The first class are the few, and the second
class are the many. The first class are
the rich, and the second class are the poor.

An extract from KEW GARDENS, an unpublished MS of
CHATTERTON being a fac simile of his hand writing.

What are the Wages of the tuncful Nine,
What are their pleasures when compar'd to mine.
Happy I eat and toll my numerous Pence,
Free from the Servitude of Rhime & Sense;
Tho' sing-song Whithead ushers in the year,
With Joy to Britain's King and Sovereign dear:
And in compliance to an ancient Mode,
Measures his Syllables into an Gde;
Yet such the scurvy Merit of his Muse,
He bows to Deans and licks his Lordship's Shoes
Then leave the wicked barren way of rhime,
Fly far from Poverty, be wise in time:
Regard the Office ^{more,} Parnassus less,
Put your religion in a decent dress;
Then may your Interest in the Town advance,
Above the reach of Muses or Romance.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following pages were composed at the request of the respectable Editor of the Biographia Britannica, in order to be inserted in that valuable work. The author, however, requested leave to print off a small edition, in a separate state, for the accommodation and satisfaction of a few friends, to whom he was indebted on the occasion for some valuable communications.

Perhaps the admirers of CHATTERTON, and those in particular who have interested themselves in the controversy relating to Rowley's Poems, will not be displeased at seeing collected in one view all the particulars which are known concerning that extraordinary character.

The only claim to the public approbation, which the author presumes to assert in favour of this little volume, is that of authenticity, as the public may rest assured that no fact has been admitted but upon the most unexceptionable testimony. He is not at liberty to publish all his authorities, but whenever they are known he is confident in the assertion, that they will be found highly respectable. The notes marked O. were added by a most learned and intelligent friend, who honoured the manuscript with his perusal.

ADVERTISING

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Entered at Stationers Hall.

Persons who have inserted themselves in the contemporary relation to Rowley's Poems, will not be disappointed at seeing collected in one view all the pertinent remarks and views concerning that extraordinary character. The following is the nature of the speculation, which the author proposes to afford in favour of this little volume. It is that of authenticity, as the public may rest assured that no fact has been admitted but upon the most unexceptionable testimony. He is not at liberty to publish all his authorities, but whenever they are known he is confident in the assertion, that they will be found highly respectable. The notes marked O, were added by a well learned and intelligent friend, who honoured the manuscript with his pen.

TO THE RIGHT HON. THE

MARQUIS of LANSDOWN.

MY LORD,

PERMIT me to introduce the unpatronised CHATTERTON to the only statesman of our time who has manifested a genuine zeal for the promotion of literature and science. Had the unfortunate subject of these pages but known, or had he made himself known to your Lordship, there is much probability that the world would at this day have continued to enjoy the increasing fruits of his uncommon talents.

It would, however, be the extreme of injustice to confine your Lordship's commendation to the exercise of private munificence, or the admiration of learning. As one of that public, therefore, who are probably indebted for every thing which they possess or enjoy, to the
wisdom

wisdom and virtue of your Lordship's administration, allow me to unite with all the honest and discerning part of the community, in expressing my gratitude for the most honourable and advantageous Peace which was ever atchieved by this nation. When the little contentions of Party are no more, and the clouds of Faction are dissipated, the Friend of Mankind and his Country will stand consecrated to the veneration of posterity; and it will appear greater to have performed much within a short period, than to have enjoyed the emoluments of office for an age of inactivity.

I have the honour to be,

MY LORD,

With great respect,

Your Lordship's obliged

And faithful Servant,

*Winkworth Buildings,
May 20, 1789.*

The Author.

THE
L I F E
O F
THOMAS CHATTERTON.

THE ancestry of men of genius is seldom of much importance to the public or their biographers; the commonwealth of literature is almost a perfect democracy, in which the rise or promotion of individuals is generally the consequence of their respective merits. The family of Chatterton, however, though in no respect illustrious, is more nearly connected with some of the circumstances of his literary history than that of most other votaries of the Muses.—It appears that the office of sexton of St. Mary

B

Redcliffe

Redcliffe, in Bristol, had continued in different branches of this family for more than one hundred and fifty years; and that John Chatterton, the last of the name who enjoyed that office, was elected in March 1725, and continued sexton till his death, which happened in the year 1748 *. Thomas Chatterton, the nephew of the preceding, and father to the extraordinary person who is the subject of these memoirs, had, we are informed, been in the early part of life in the station of a writing usher to a classical school †, was afterwards engaged as a singing man of the Cathedral of Bristol, and latterly was master of the free school in Pyle-street in the same city ‡. He died in August 1752 ||, leaving

* Dr. Milles's Preliminary Dissertation to Rowley's Poems, page 6.

† Ibid.

‡ Ib. Mr. Bryant's Obs. p. 514.

|| Ibid.

leaving his wife then pregnant of a son, who was born on the 20th of November, and baptized the 1st of January following, by the name of THOMAS, at St. Mary Redcliffe, by the Rev. Mr. Gibbs, vicar of that church.

The life of Chatterton, though short, was eventful; it commenced as it ended, in indigence and misfortune. By the premature loss of his father he was deprived of that careful attention which would probably have conducted his early years through all the difficulties that circumstances or disposition might oppose to the attainment of knowledge; and by the unpromising aspect of his infant faculties he was excluded a seminary, which might have afforded advantages superior to those he afterwards enjoyed. His father had been succeeded in the school at Pyle-street by a Mr. Love, and to his care Chatterton was committed at the age

of five years ; but either his faculties were not yet opened, or the waywardness of genius, which will pursue only such objects as are self-approved, incapacitated him from receiving instruction in the ordinary methods ; and he was remanded to his mother as a dull boy, and incapable of improvement *. Nothing is more fallacious than the judgments which are formed during infancy of the future abilities of youth. Mrs. Chatterton was rendered extremely unhappy by the apparently tardy understanding of her son, till *he fell in love*, as she expressed herself, with the illuminated capitals of an old musical manuscript, in French, which enabled her, by taking advantage of the momentary passion, to initiate him in the alphabet †. She taught him afterwards to read from an old black-lettered Testament, or Bible ‡.

Perhaps

* Bryant's Observations, p. 519.

† Ib. Milles's Prelim. Diff. p. 5.

‡ Milles's Prelim. Diff. p. 5.

Perhaps the bent of most men's studies may, in some measure, be determined by accident, and frequently in very early life; nor is it unreasonable to suppose that his peculiar attachment to antiquities may, in a considerable degree, have resulted from this little circumstance.

We are not informed by what means or by what recommendation he gained admission into Colston's charity-school; but doubtless, in the situation of his mother at the time, it must have been a most desirable event; however unsuitable such a course of discipline might be to the improvement of Chatterton's peculiar talents. Most of those prodigies of genius, who had hitherto astonished mankind, by the early display of abilities and learning, had been aided by the advantage of able instructors, or had at least been left at liberty to pursue the impulse of their superior understandings; it was the lot of Chatter-

ton to be confined to the mechanical drudgery of a charity-school; and the little ordinary portions of leisure, with which boys in his situation are indulged, was the only time allowed him to lay the foundation of that extensive and abstruse erudition which decorated even his early years. This seminary, founded by Edward Colston, Esq. is situate at St. Augustine's Back in Bristol, and is much upon the same plan with Christ's Hospital in London, (the only plan perhaps on which a charity-school can be generally useful,) the boys being *boarded* in the house, clothed, and taught reading, writing, and arithmetic. Chatterton, at this period, wanted a few months of eight years of age, being admitted on the 3d of August 1760*.

The

* On the authority of a letter signed G. B. dated Bristol, August 30, 1778, printed in the St. James's Chronicle. In Dr. Milles's Prelim. Diss. it is 1761; but this must be a misprint, as all agree that he was between seven and eight years old when admitted.

The rules of this institution are strict. The school hours in summer are from seven o'clock till twelve in the morning, and from one till five in the afternoon; and in winter, from eight to twelve, and from one to four. The boys are obliged to be in bed every night in the year at eight o'clock, and are never permitted to be absent from school, except on Saturdays and Saints days, and then only from between one and two in the afternoon till between seven and eight in the evening. The detail of these apparently trivial particulars may at present favour of a culpable minuteness; but their importance will be experienced before I have concluded.

The first years of his residence at this seminary passed without notice, and perhaps without effort. His sister, indeed, in her letter to Mr. Croft, remarks, that he very early discovered a thirst for pre-eminence, and that even before he was

five years old he was accustomed to preside over his play-mates *. There is a curious letter from Mr. Thistlethwaite of Bristol, published by Dr. Milles in his edition of Rowley's Poems, which contains many interesting particulars concerning Chatterton. In the summer of 1763, Mr. Thistlethwaite, who was then very young, contracted an intimacy with one Thomas Philips †, an usher or assistant-master at Colston's school. Though the education of Philips had not been the most liberal, he

* Love and Madness, p. 161. There is an anecdote of Chatterton (it is given, however, only on a vague and indistinct report) partly to the same purpose. When very young, a manufacturer promised to make Mrs. Chatterton's children a present of some earthen-ware; on asking the boy what device he would have painted on his—"Paint me (said he) an angel, with wings, and a trumpet, to trumpet my name over the world."

† In all probability the person on whose death Chatterton composed an Elegy. I wish we were possessed of more perfect memoirs of Philips. His taste for poetry excited a similar flame in several young men, who made no mean figure in the periodical publications of that day, in Chatterton, Thistlethwaite, Cary, Fowler, and others.

he yet possessed a taste for history and poetry; and by his attempts in verse, excited a degree of literary emulation among the elder boys. It is very remarkable, that Chatterton is said to have appeared altogether as an idle spectator of these poetical contests; he simply contented himself with the sports and pastimes which appeared more immediately adapted to his age; he apparently possessed neither inclination nor ability for literary pursuits, nor does Mr. Thistlethwaite believe that he attempted a single couplet during the first three years of his acquaintance with him*. Whatever grounds Mr. Thistlethwaite might have for this opinion, it, however, only serves to furnish an additional proof of the deceitfulness of those conjectures which are formed concerning the abilities of youth. The pert and forward boy, of active, but
superficial

* Milles's Rowley, p. 454.

superficial talents, generally bears away the palm from the modesty and pensiveness of genius. Such a disposition, which is in reality the result of insensibility, too frequently meets with encouragement, which produces indolence, impudence, and dissipation ; while the less showy, but more excellent understandings, are depressed by neglect, or disheartened by discouragement. Chatterton, doubtless, at that very period, was possessed of a vigour of understanding, of a quickness of penetration, a boldness of imagination, far superior to the talents of his companions. But that penetration itself led him, perhaps, to feel more strongly his own deficiencies ; those delicate, yet vivid feelings which usually accompany real abilities, induced him to decline a contest, in which there was a danger of experiencing the mortification of being inferior. If he produced any compositions, his exquisite
taste

taste led him to suppress them. In the mean time he was laying in stores of information, and improving both his imagination and his judgment. About his tenth year he acquired a taste for reading; and out of the trifle, which was allowed him by his mother for pocket-money, he began to hire books from a circulating library. As his taste was different from children of his age, his dispositions were also different. Instead of the thoughtless levity of childhood, he possessed the gravity, pensiveness, and melancholy of maturer life. His spirits were uneven; he was frequently so lost in contemplation, that for many days together he would say very little, and apparently by constraint. His intimates in the school were few, and those of the most serious cast. Between his eleventh and twelfth year, he wrote a Catalogue of the Books he had read, to the number of seventy. It is rather unfortunate

fortunate that this Catalogue was not preserved; his sister only informs us that they principally consisted of history and divinity *. At the hours allotted him for play, he generally retired to read, and he was particularly solicitous to borrow books †. Though he does not appear to have manifested any violent inclination to display his abilities, yet we have undoubted proofs that very early in life, he did not fail to exercise himself in composition. His sister having made him a present of a pocket-book as a New-Year's gift, he returned it to her at the end of the year filled with writing, chiefly poetry ‡. It was probably from the remains of this pocket-book, that the author of *Love and Madness* transcribed a poem, which appears by the date (April 14th, 1764) to have

* Mrs. Newton's Letter in *Love and Madness*.

† Dr. Milles's Prelim. Diff. page 5.

‡ Mrs. Newton's Letter.

have been written at the age of eleven years and a half*. This fact is certainly a strong

* It may not be improper to produce this poem, not only as it is the earliest existing specimen of Chatterton's compositions, but also for the sake of some remarks, which will probably throw some light on the genius and character of its author.

APOSTATE WILL, by T. C.

In days of old, when Wesley's pow'r
Gather'd new strength by every hour;
Apostate Will just sunk in trade,
Resolv'd his bargain should be made;
Then strait to Wesley he repairs,
And puts on grave and solemn airs,
Then thus the pious man address'd,
Good Sir, I think your doctrine best,
Your servant will a Wesley be,
Therefore the principles teach me.
The preacher then instructions gave,
How he in this world should behave,
He hears, assents, and gives a nod,
Says every word's the word of God.
Then lifting his dissembling eyes,
How blessed is the sect he cries,
Nor Bingham, Young, nor Stillingfleet
Shall make me from this sect retreat.
He then his circumstance declar'd,
How hardly with him matters far'd,
Begg'd him next meeting for to make
A small collection for his sake;

The

a strong contradiction to Mr. Thistle-
thwaite's assertion, yet perhaps it is not
on

The preacher said, do not repine,
The whole collection shall be thine.
With looks demure and cringing bows,
About his business strait he goes ;
His outward acts were grave and prim,
The Methodist appear'd in him ;
But, be his outward what it will,
His heart was an Apostate's still ;
He'd oft profess an hallow'd flame,
And every where preach'd Wesley's name ;
He was a preacher and what not,
As long as money could be got ;
He'd oft profess with holy fire,
The labourer's worthy of his hire.

It happen'd once upon a time,
When all his works were in their prime,
A noble place appear'd in view,
Then——to the Methodists, adieu ;
A Methodist no more he'll be,
The Protestants serve best for *he* ;
Then to the curate strait he ran,
And thus address'd the rev'rend man ;
I was a Methodist, 'tis true,
With penitence I turn to you ;
O that it were your bounteous will
That I the vacant place might fill !
With justice I'd myself acquit,
Do every thing that's right and fit.

The

on the whole so difficult to be reconciled
as may at first be suspected. In the registers
of

The curate straitway gave consent——
To take the place he quickly went.
Accordingly he took the place,
And keeps it with dissembled grace.

April 14, 1764.

In the first place, this poem shews the early turn and bent of his genius to satire, which predominated throughout his short life, and with which he began and ended his literary career. Not only his school-fellows and his instructors became the subjects of it at this early period, but his acquaintance and his friends felt its force.

In the next place, it appears that he was then no stranger to the works of Bingham, Young, and Stillingfleet, which were probably among the books of divinity that composed the list of those he had read or consulted, as mentioned in Mrs. Newton's Letter.

Lastly, let it be observed, that the person he satirizes is supposed to have turned methodist for mercenary motives, and to have preached the gospel merely to put money in his purse.—Now Mr. Thistlethwaite, in his letter to Dean Milles, after mentioning Chatterton's intentions of leaving his master's service and going to London, says—"I interrogated him as to the objects of his views and expectations, and what mode of life he intended to pursue on his arrival at London. The answer I received was a memorable one: My first attempt, said he, shall be in the literary way; the promises I have received are sufficient to dispel doubt; but should I, contrary to my expectations,
find

of the memory, a few months is but a trifling anachronism; besides, tho' Chatterton might compose at that time, it does not follow that he was under any necessity of imparting his compositions to Mr. Thistlethwaite or Mr. Philips; indeed, he was the less likely to make them public, as they were of the satirical kind, and consequently, if discovered, the boy might

find myself deceived, I will in that case turn Methodist preacher: Credulity is as potent a deity as ever, and a new sect may easily be devised," &c.—*Milles's Rowley*, page 459.

Chatterton might in some measure have in view the character which he had before so successfully depicted, when he thus expressed himself to Mr. Thistlethwaite. As his genius was versatile, and his reading extensive, it is possible this profession might not be without some serious foundation; indeed, if we are to believe that the fragment of a sermon, which he produced as Rowley's, was really his own composition, certainly many a quack preacher sets out upon a much slenderer stock of divinity than Chatterton was master of at that time. The imagination, however, forms many schemes which the heart wants fortitude to reduce to action; and perhaps, after all, his declaration to Mr. T. might be no more than a temporary piece of gaiety, and that he might still, though released from religious scruples, abhor the dishonourable character of a hypocrite.

might be apprehensive of exposing himself to punishment.

At twelve years old he was confirmed by the Bishop: His sister adds, that he made very sensible and serious remarks on the awfulness of the ceremony, and on his own feelings preparatory to it *. Happy had it been for him if these sentiments, so congenial to the amiable dispositions of youth, had continued to influence his conduct during his maturer years. He soon after, during the week in which he was door-keeper, made some verses on the last day, paraphrased the ninth chapter of Job, and some chapters of Isaiah. The bent of his genius, however, more strongly inclined him to satire, of which he was tolerably lavish on his school-fellows, nor did the upper-master, Mr. Warner, escape the rod of his reprehension. The first

C

poetical

* Mrs. Newton's Letter.

poetical essays of most young authors are in the pastoral style, when the imagination is luxuriant, the hopes and contemplations romantic, and when the mind is better acquainted with the objects of nature and of the sight than with any other; but Chatterton, without the advantages of education or encouragement, and, on these accounts, diffident perhaps of his own powers, wanted the stimulative of indignation to prompt him to action; and a quickness of resentment appears through life to have been one of his most distinguishing characteristics *. From what has been related, it is probable that Chatterton was no great favourite with Mr. Warner; he, however, found a friend in the under-

* A late French writer, in his Memoirs of the poet De la Harpe, who had manifested a like turn for satire in his early years, says—"La satire est la premiere qualité qui se developpe ordinairement dans un jeune poete. Celui se l'exerce d'une façon ridicule envers ses maitres & meme envers M. Aflalin."

under-master, Mr. Haynes, who conceived for him, I have been informed, a strong and affectionate attachment.

A very remarkable fact is recorded by Mr. Thistlethwaite in the letter already quoted. "Going down Horse-street, near the school, one day," says he, "I accidentally met with Chatterton. Entering into conversation with him, the subject of which I do not now recollect, he informed me that he was in the possession of certain old manuscripts, which had been found deposited in a chest in Redcliffe church, and that he had lent some or one of them to Philips. Within a day or two after this I saw Philips, and repeated to him the information I had received from Chatterton. Philips produced a manuscript on parchment or vellum, which I am confident was Elenoure and Juga*,

C 2

a kind

* See Rowley's Poems, p. 19, third edition.

a kind of pastoral eclogue, afterwards published in the Town and Country Magazine for May 1769. The parchment or velum appeared to have been closely pared round the margin; for what purpose, or by what accident, I know not, but the words were evidently entire and unmutated. As the writing was yellow and pale, manifestly (as I conceive) occasioned by age, and consequently difficult to decypher, Philips had with his pen traced and gone over several of the lines, (which, as far as my recollection serves, were written in the manner of prose, and without any regard to punctuation,) and by that means laboured to attain the object of his pursuit, an investigation of their meaning. I endeavoured to assist him; but from an almost total ignorance of the characters, manners, language, and orthography of the age in which the lines were written, all our efforts were unprofitably exerted;

exerted; and though we arrived at the explanation of, and connected many of the words, still the sense was notoriously deficient *." If this narrative may be depended on, Chatterton had discovered these manuscripts before he was twelve years of age. It is, however, scarcely consistent with other accounts, since both Mrs. Chatterton and her daughter seem to be of opinion, that he knew nothing of the parchments brought from Redcliffe church, which were supposed to contain Rowley's poems, till after he had left school †.

Under all the disadvantages of education, the acquisitions of Chatterton were surprising. Besides the variety of reading which he had gone through, the author of *Love and Madness* remarks, he had some

C 3 knowledge

* Milles's *Rowley*.

† Milles's *Prelim. Diff.* p. 5. There appears good reason for suspecting some mistake in Mr. Thistlethwaite's narrative, either as to the date, or some other circumstance.

knowledge of music *.—Is it not probable that a few of the rudiments of vocal music made a part of the education of a charity boy? He had also acquired a taste for drawing, which afterwards he greatly improved; and the usher of the school asserted he had made a rapid progress in arithmetic †. Soon after he left school, he corresponded with a boy, who had been his bed-fellow while at Colston's, and was bound apprentice to a merchant at New-York ‡. Mrs. Newton says, he read a letter at home, which he wrote to this friend; it consisted of a collection of all the hard words in the English language, and he requested his friend to answer it in the

* Love and Madness, p. 167.

† Ibid. p. 161.

‡ At the desire of this friend, he wrote love verses to be transmitted to him, and exhibited as his own. It is remarkable, that when first questioned concerning the old poems, he said he was engaged to transcribe them for a gentleman, who also employed him to write verses on a lady with whom he was in love.

the same style. An extraordinary effect of his discovering an employment adapted to his genius is remarked in the same letter. He had been gloomy from the time he began to learn, but it was observed that he became more cheerful after he began to write poetry*.

On the 1st of July 1767, he left the charity-school, and was bound apprentice to Mr. John Lambert, attorney, of Bristol, for seven years, to learn the art and mystery of a scrivener. The apprentice fee was ten pounds; the master was to find him in meat, drink, lodging, and clothes; the mother in washing and mending. He slept in the same room with the foot-boy, and went every morning at eight o'clock to the office, which was at some distance, and, except the usual time for dinner, continued there till eight o'clock at night,

C 4

after

† Milles's Prelim. Diff. p. 5.

after which he was at liberty till ten, when he was always expected to be at home. Mr. Lambert affords the most honourable testimony in Chatterton's favour, with respect to the regularity of his attendance, as he never exceeded the limited hours but once, when he had leave to spend the evening with his mother and some friends *. His hours of leisure also Mr. Lambert had no reason to suspect were spent in improper company, but generally with his mother, Mr. Clayfield, Mr. Barrett, or Mr. Catcott. He never had occasion to charge him with neglect of business, or any ill behaviour whatever. Once, and but once, he thought himself under the necessity of correcting him, and that was the pure effect of his disposition for satire. A short time after he was bound to Mr. Lambert, his old schoolmaster received a

very

* Mrs. Newton's Letter above quoted.

very abusive anonymous letter, which he suspected came from Chatterton, and he complained of it to his master, who was soon convinced of the justice of the complaint, not only from the hand-writing, which was ill-disguised *, but from the letter being written on the same paper with that which was used in the office. On this occasion Mr. Lambert corrected the boy with a blow or two. He, however, accuses him of a fullen and gloomy temper, which particularly displayed itself among the servants †. Chatterton's superior abilities, and superior information, with the pride which usually accompanies these qualities, doubtless rendered him an unfit inhabitant of the kitchen, where his ignorant

* This circumstance is not unworthy of notice. If Chatterton was really the forger of the MSS. attributed to Rowley, how came he in this instance to be unable to disguise his own hand-writing?

† From the information of Mr. Lambert to a friend of the author.

ignorant associates would naturally be inclined to envy, and would affect to despise those accomplishments, which he held in the highest estimation ; and even the familiarity of vulgar and illiterate persons, must undoubtedly be rather disgusting than agreeable to a mind like his.

Mr. Lambert's was a situation not unfavourable to the cultivation of his genius. Though much confined, he had much leisure. His master's business consumed a very small portion of his time ; frequently, his sister says, it did not engage him above two hours in a day*. While Mr. Lambert was from home, and no particular business interfered, his stated employment was to copy precedents ; a book of which, containing 344 large folio pages, closely written by Chatterton while he remained in the office, is, I believe, still in the possession of Mr. Lambert, as well

* Mrs. Newton's Letter above quoted.

well as another of about 30 pages. The office library contained nothing but law books; except an old edition of Cambden's Britannia. There is no doubt, however, but Chatterton took care amply to supply his mental wants from his old acquaintance at the circulating libraries.

He had continued this course of life for upwards of a year; not, however, without some symptoms of an aversion for his profession, before he began to attract the notice of the literary world. In the beginning of October 1768, the new bridge at Bristol was finished; at that time there appeared, in Farley's Bristol Journal, an account of the ceremonies on opening the old bridge, introduced by a letter to the printer, intimating that "The following description of *the Fryars first passing over the old bridge*, was taken from an ancient manuscript," and signed "Dunhelmus Bristolien-

tolienfis *.” The paper, if it be allowed to be the fabrication of modern times, demonstrates strong powers of invention, and an uncommon knowledge of ancient customs.

* “ Description of the Fryars passing over the Old Bridge,
“ taken from an ancient manuscript.

“ On Fridaie was the time fixed for passing the new-
“ brydge. Aboute the time of tollynge the tenth clocke,
“ Master Greggoire Dalbenye mounted on a fergreyne
“ horse, informed Master Maier all thynges were pre-
“ pared, when two Beadils went first streying fire. Next
“ came a manne dressed up as follows, hose of gootskyne
“ crinepart outwards, doublette & waifcot, also over which
“ a white robe without sleeves, much like an albe but not
“ so long, reachinge but to his hands. A girdle of azure
“ over his left shoulder, rechede also to his hands on the
“ right & doubled back to his left, bucklynge with a goulden
“ buckle dangled to his knee, thereby representinge a Saxon
“ earlderman.

“ In his hands he bare a shield, the maistre of Gille a
“ Brogton, who painted the same, representing Sainte
“ Warburgh crossing the foorde ; then a mickle strong man
“ in armour, carried a huge anlace, after whom came fix
“ claryons & fix minstrels, who song the song of Sainte
“ Warburgh. Then came Master Maier mounted on a
“ white horse dight with fable trappyngs wrought about by
“ the Nunnes of Saint Kenna, with gould and Silver, his
“ hayre braded with ribbons & a chaperon with the auntient
“ armes of Bristowe fastened on his forehead. Master Mair
“ bare in his hande a goulden rodde, & a coagean squire
“ bare

toms. So singular a memoir could not fail to excite curiosity, and many persons became anxious to see the original. The printer, Mr. Farley, could give no account of

“ bare in his hande, his helmet waulkinge by the syde of
 “ the horse. Then came the earlderman & city broders,
 “ mounted on fabyell horses dyght with white trappynge &
 “ plumes & scarlet caps & chaperons having thereon fable
 “ plumes; after them, the preefts & frears, parish mendicant
 “ & secular, some syngynge Sainte Warburghs songe,
 “ others foundynge clarions thereto & others some citri-
 “ alles.)

“ In thilke manner reachynge the brydge the manne
 “ with the anlace stode on the fyrst top of a mounde, yreed
 “ in the midst of the brydge, than went up the manne
 “ with the sheelde, after him the minstrels & clarions;
 “ and then the preestes & freeres all in white albes,
 “ making a most goodly shewe, the maier & earldermen
 “ standinge rounde, they songe with the sound of claryons,
 “ the songe of Sainte Baldwyne, which being done, the
 “ manne on the top threw with great myght his anlace into
 “ the sea & the clarions sounded an auncient charge &
 “ forloyne. Then theie song again the song of Sainte
 “ Warburge, & proceeded up Xts hill to the crosse,
 “ where a Latin sermon was preached by Ralph de Blun-
 “ derville, & with sound of clarion theye againe went to the
 “ brydge and there dined, spendynge the rest of the daye
 “ in sports and plaies, the freers of Sainte Augustyne doing
 “ the play of the knights of Bristow meekynge a great fire
 “ at night on Kynslate hill.”

of it, nor of the person who brought the copy ; but after much inquiry, it was discovered that the manuscript was brought by a youth between fifteen and sixteen years of age, of the name of Thomas Chatterton *.

“ To the threats of those who treated him (agreeably to his appearance) as a child, he returned nothing but haughtiness, and a refusal to give any account †.”

By milder usage he was somewhat softened, and appeared inclined to give all the information in his power. He at first alleged, that he was employed to transcribe the contents of certain ancient manuscripts by a gentleman, who also had engaged him to furnish complimentary verses, inscribed to a lady with whom that gentleman was in love. On being further pressed, he at last informed the inquirers, that he had received the paper in question, together with many other manuscripts, from his father,

* Preface to Rowley's Poems.

† Croft's Love and Madness, p. 145.

father, who had found them in a large chest in the upper room over the chapel, on the north side of Redcliffe church*. But a still more circumstantial account of the discovery of these manuscripts, is preserved in Mr. Bryant's Observations on Rowley's Poems. Over the north porch of St. Mary Redcliffe church, which was founded, or at least rebuilt, by Mr. W. Canynge, (an eminent merchant of Bristol in the 15th century, and in the reign of Edward the Fourth,) there is a kind of muniment room, in which were deposited six or seven chests, one of which in particular was called *Mr. Canynge's cofre* †; this chest, it is said, was secured by six keys,

* See Mr. Catcott's account in the preface to Rowley's poems.

† When rents were received and kept in specie, it was usual for corporate bodies to keep the writings and rents of estates left for particular purposes, in chests appropriated to each particular benefaction, and called by the benefactor's name; several old chests of this kind are still existing in the University of Cambridge. O.

keys, two of which were entrusted to the minister and procurator of the church, two to the mayor, and one to each of the church-wardens. In process of time, however, the six keys appear to have been lost; and about the year 1727, a notion prevailed that some title deeds, and other writings of value, were contained in Mr. Canynge's cofre. In consequence of this opinion, an order of vestry was made, that the chest should be opened under the inspection of an attorney; and that those writings which appeared of consequence, should be removed to the south porch of the church. The locks were therefore forced, and not only the principal chest, but the others, which were also supposed to contain writings, were all broken open. The deeds immediately relating to the church were removed, and the other manuscripts were left exposed as of no value. Considerable depredations had, from time

to

to time, been committed upon them, by different persons; but the most insatiate of these plunderers was the father of Chatterton. His uncle being sexton of St. Mary Redcliffe gave him free access to the church. He carried off, from time to time, parcels of the parchments, and one time alone, with the assistance of his boys, is known to have filled a large basket with them. They were deposited in a cupboard in the school, and employed for different purposes, such as the covering of copy books, &c.; in particular, Mr. Gibbs, the minister of the parish, having presented the boys with twenty bibles, Mr. Chatterton, in order to preserve these books from being damaged, covered them with some of the parchments. At his death, the widow being under a necessity of removing, carried the remainder of them to her own habitation. Of the discovery of their value by the younger Chatterton,

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the account of Mr. Smith, a very intimate acquaintance, which he gave to Dr. Glynn of Cambridge, is too interesting to be omitted. "When young Chatterton was first articled to Mr. Lambert, he used frequently to come home to his mother, by way of a short visit. There, one day, his eye was caught by one of these parchments, which had been converted into a thread-paper. He found not only the writing to be very old, the characters very different from common characters, but that the subject therein treated was different from common subjects. Being naturally of an inquisitive and curious turn, he was very much struck with their appearance, and, as might be expected, began to question his mother what those thread-papers were, how she got them, and whence they came. Upon farther enquiry, he was led to a full discovery of all the parchments

ments which remained* ;” the bulk of them consisted of poetical and other compositions, by Mr. Canynge, and a particular friend of his, Thomas Rowley, whom Chatterton at first called a monk, and afterwards a secular priest of the fifteenth century. Such, at least, appears to be the account which Chatterton thought proper to give, and which he wished to be believed. It is, indeed, confirmed by the testimony of his mother and sister. Mrs. Chatterton informed a friend of the Dean of Exeter, that on her removal from Pyle-street, she emptied the cupboard of its contents, partly into a large long deal box, where her husband used to keep his clothes, and partly into a square oak box of a smaller size ; carrying both with their contents to her lodgings, where, according to her account, they continued neglected

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and

* Bryant's Observations, p. 511—529.

and undisturbed, till her son first discovered their value; who having examined their contents, told his mother, ‘that he had found a treasure, and was so glad nothing could be like it.’ That he then removed all these parchments out of the large long deal box, in which his father used to keep his clothes, into the square oak box: That he was perpetually ransacking every corner of the house for more parchments, and, from time to time, carried away those he had already found by pockets full: That one day happening to see Clarke’s History of the Bible covered with one of those parchments, he swore a great oath, and stripping the book, put the cover into his pocket, and carried it away; at the same time stripping a common little Bible, but finding no writing upon the cover, replaced it again very leisurely*.

“ Upon

* Milles’s Prelim. Diss. p. 7. It does not appear that any of the parchments exhibited to Mr. Barrett, or Mr. Catcott,

“ Upon being informed of the manner in which his father had procured the parchments, he went himself to the place, and picked up four more, which, if Mrs. Chatterton rightly remembers, Mr. Barrett has at this time in his possession *.”

“ Mrs. Newton, his sister, being asked, if she remembers his having mentioned Rowley’s poems, after the discovery of the parchments ; says, that he was perpetually talking on that subject, and once in particular, (about two years before he left Bristol) when a relation, one Mr. Stephens of Salisbury, made them a visit, he talked of nothing else †.”

Nearly about the time when the paper in Farley’s Journal, concerning the old bridge, became the subject of conversation,

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as

Catcott, were of a size sufficient for a covering for an octavo book, much less for a quarto or folio. O.

* Milles’s Prelim. Diss. p. 7.

† Ibid.

as Mr. Catcott of Bristol, a gentleman of an inquisitive turn, and fond of reading, was walking with a friend in Redcliffe church, he was informed by him of several ancient pieces of poetry, which had been found there, and which were in the possession of a young person with whom he was acquainted. This person proved to be Chatterton, to whom Mr. Catcott desired to be introduced. He accordingly had an interview; and soon after obtained from him, very readily, without any reward, the *Bristow Tragedy* *, Rowley's Epitaph upon Mr. Canynge's ancestor †, with some other smaller pieces. In a few days he brought some more, among which was *the Yellow Roll*. About this period, Mr. Barrett, a respectable surgeon in Bristol, and a man of letters, had projected a history of his native city, and was anxiously

* See Rowley's Poems, p. 44.

† Ibid. p. 277.

ously collecting materials for that work. Such a discovery, therefore, as that of Chatterton, could scarcely escape the vigilance of Mr. Barrett's friends. The pieces in Mr. Catcott's possession, of which some were copies and some originals, were immediately communicated to Mr. Barrett, whose friendship and patronage by these means our young literary adventurer was fortunate enough to secure. During the first conversations which Mr. Catcott had with him, he heard him mention the names of most of the poems since printed, as being in his possession. He afterwards grew more suspicious and reserved; and it was but rarely, and with difficulty, that any more originals could be obtained from him. He confessed to Mr. Catcott that he had destroyed several; and some which he owned to have been in his possession, were never afterwards seen. One of these was the tragedy of the Apostate,

of which a small part only has been preserved by Mr. Barrett. The subject of it was the apostatizing of a person from the Christian to the Jewish faith *. Mr. Barrett, however, obtained from him at different times several fragments, some of them of a considerable length; they are all written upon vellum, and he asserted them to be a part of the original manuscripts, which he had obtained in the manner which has been already related. A *fac simile* of one of these fragments is published in Mr. Tyrwhitt's and Dr. Milles's editions of Rowley's Poems; and the fragments in prose, which are considerably larger, we are taught to expect in Mr. Barrett's History of Bristol. In the same work we are also promised “ *A Discourse on Bristowe*, and the other historical pieces in prose, which Chatterton at different times delivered

* Bryant's Observations, p. 517.

✓ livered out, as copied from Rowley's manuscripts *."

The friendship of Mr. Barrett and Mr. Catcott was of considerable advantage to Chatterton. They supplied him occasionally with money, as a compensation for some of the fragments of Rowley, with which he gratified them †. He spent many agreeable hours in their company; and their acquaintance introduced him into a more respectable line than he could easily have attained without it. His sister remarks, that after he was introduced to these gentlemen, his ambition daily and perceptibly encreased; and he would frequently

* Preface to Rowley's Poems, p. 11. It is now said that Mr. B. does not mean to insert any of these pieces in his History.

† Some of his later compositions, however, demonstrate, that he was not thoroughly satisfied with his Bristol patrons; and Mr. Thistlethwaite does not hesitate to assert, that he felt himself greatly disappointed in his expectations of pecuniary rewards for his communications. K.

quently speak in raptures of the undoubted success of his plan for future life. "When in spirits, he would enjoy his rising fame, and, confident of advancement, he would promise his mother and I should be partakers of his success*." Both these gentlemen also lent him books; Mr. Barrett lent him several medical authors†, and, at his request, gave him some instructions in surgery. His taste was versatile, and his studies various. In the course of the years 1768 and 1769, Mr. Thistlethwaite frequently saw him, and describes in a lively manner the employment of his leisure hours. "One day," says Mr. T. "he might be found busily employed in the study of heraldry and English antiquities, both of which are numbered among the most favourite of his pursuits;

* Mrs. Newton's letter before quoted.

† Ibid.

pursuits; the next discovered him deeply engaged, confounded and perplexed amidst the subtleties of metaphysical disquisition, or lost and bewildered in the abstruse labyrinth of mathematical researches; and these in an instant again neglected and thrown aside, to make room for music and astronomy, of both which sciences his knowledge was entirely confined to theory. Even physic was not without a charm to allure his imagination, and he would talk of Galen, Hippocrates, and Paracelsus, with all the confidence and familiarity of a modern empirick*." It may naturally be supposed, that his acquaintance with most of these sciences was very superficial; but his knowledge of antiquities was extensive, and we might perhaps say profound. With a view of perfecting himself in these favourite studies, he borrowed Skinner's Etymologicon

* Milles's Rowley, p. 456.

Etymologicon of Mr. Barrett, but returned it in a few days as useless, most of the interpretations being in Latin. He also borrowed Benson's Saxon Vocabulary, but returned it immediately on the same account *. His disappointment was partly compensated by the acquisition of Kersey's Dictionary, and Speght's Chaucer, (the Glossary to which he carefully transcribed †.) With these books he was furnished by Mr. Green, a bookseller in Bristol. Probably the mortification he received at not being able to make that use which he desired of Skinner and of Benson, might be an additional stimulative to the great inclination which he manifested to acquaint himself with Latin, and his design to attempt it without a master. From this project his friend, Mr. Smith, took great pains to dissuade him,

* Bryant's Observ. p. 532.

† Milles's Prelim. Diss. p. 5, and 17.

him, and advised him rather to apply to French, a competent knowledge of which might be sooner attained, and which promised to be of more essential service*. Whatever plan he adopted, he entered upon it with an earnestness and fervour almost unexampled. Indeed, the poetic enthusiasm was never more strongly exhibited than in Chatterton. Like Milton, he fancied he was more capable of writing well at some particular times than at others, and the full of the moon was the season when he imagined his genius to be in perfection; at which period, as if the immediate presence of that luminary added to the inspiration, he frequently devoted a considerable portion of the night to composition†.—“He was always,” says Mr. Smith, “extremely fond of walking in the fields, particularly in Redcliffe meadows, and of talking about these
(Row-

* Bryant's Observ. p. 532.

† Mrs. Newton's letter to Mr. C.

(Rowley's) manuscripts, and sometimes reading them there. "Come (he would say) you and I will take a walk in the meadow. I have got the cleverest thing for you imaginable. It is worth half-a-crown merely to have a sight of it, and to hear me read it to you." When we arrived at the place proposed, he would produce his parchment, shew it and read it to me. There was one spot in particular, full in view of the church, in which he seemed to take a peculiar delight. He would frequently lay himself down, fix his eyes upon the church, and seem as if he were in a kind of trance. Then, on a sudden and abruptly, he would tell me, "that steeple was burnt down by lightning: that was the place where they formerly acted plays*." His Sundays were commonly spent in walking alone into the country about Bristol, as far as the duration

* Bryant's Observ. p. 530.

duration of day-light would allow; and from these excursions he never failed to bring home with him drawings of churches, or of some other objects, which had impressed his romantic imagination*.

His attention, while at Bristol, was not confined to Rowley; his pen was exercised in a variety of pieces, chiefly satirical, and several essays, both in prose and verse, which he sent to the Magazines. I have not been able to trace any thing of Chatterton's in the Town and Country Magazine (with which he appears to have first corresponded) before February 1769; but in the acknowledgments to correspondents for November 1768, we find "D. B. of Bristol's favour will be gladly received."

Dunhelmus

* Love and Madness, p. 159. The Dean of Exeter mentions drawings by Rowley of Bristol Castle, which he supposes genuine, but which Mr. Warton reprobates as fictions of Chatterton, the representations of a building which never existed, in a capricious, affected style of Gothic architecture, reducible to no system. O.

Dunhelmus Bristolienfis was the signature he generally employed. In the course of the year 1769, he was a considerable contributor to that publication. One of the first of his pieces which appeared was a letter on the tinctures of the Saxon heralds, dated Bristol, February 4; and in the same Magazine a poem was inserted on Mr. Alcock, of Bristol, an excellent miniature painter, signed *Asaphides* *. In the same Magazine for March are some extracts from Rowley's manuscripts; and in different numbers for the succeeding months, some pieces called Saxon poems, written in the style of Ossian.

The whole of Chatterton's life presents a fund of useful instruction to young persons of brilliant and lively talents, and affords a strong dissuasive against that impetuosity

* This piece, with two or three others in Chatterton's Miscellanies, was claimed by John Lockstone, a linen-draper in Bristol, a great friend of Chatterton; by his confession, however, it was corrected by the latter.

petuosity of expectation, and those delusive hopes of success, founded upon the consciousness of genius and merit, which lead them to neglect the ordinary means of acquiring competence and independence. The early disgust which Chatterton conceived for his profession, may be accounted one of the prime sources of his misfortunes. Among the efforts which he made to extricate himself from this irksome situation, the most remarkable is his application to the Hon. Horace Walpole, in March 1769*; the ground of which was an offer to furnish him with some accounts of a series of great painters, who had flourished at Bristol, which Chatterton said had been lately discovered, with some old poems, in that city. The packet sent by Chatterton was left at Bathurst's, Mr. Walpole's bookseller, and contained, beside

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* Two Letters by the Honourable Horace Walpole, P. 55.

this letter, an ode or little poem, of two or three stanzas in alternate rhyme, on the death of Richard I. as a specimen of the poems which were found. Mr. Walpole had but just before been made the instrument of introducing into the world Mr. M'Pherson's forgeries; a similar application, therefore, served at once to awaken his suspicion. He, however, answered Chatterton's letter, desiring further information; and in reply, was informed, that "he (Chatterton) was the son of a poor widow, who supported him with great difficulty; that he was apprentice to an attorney, but had a taste for more elegant studies." The letter hinted a wish that Mr. Walpole would assist him in emerging from so dull a profession, by procuring some place, in which he might pursue the natural bias of his genius. He affirmed that great treasures of ancient poetry had been discovered at Bristol, and were in the hands of a person who had lent him the specimens

men already transmitted, as well as a pastoral (Elinoure and Juga) which accompanied this second letter. Mr. Walpole wrote to a friend, a noble lady at Bath, to enquire after the author of these letters, who found his account of himself verified in every particular. In the mean time the specimens were communicated to Mr. Gray and Mr. Mason, and those gentlemen, at first sight, pronounced them forgeries. Mr. Walpole, though convinced of the author's intention to impose upon him, could not, as he himself confesses, help admiring the spirit of poetry which animated these compositions. The testimonies of his approbation, however, were too cold to produce in Chatterton any thing but lasting disgust. Mr. Walpole's reply was indeed (according to his own account) rather too much in the common-place style of Court replies; though some allowance is to be made for

his peculiar situation, and for his just apprehension of a new imposition to be practised on him. He complained in general terms of his want of power to be a patron, and advised the young man to apply himself to the duties of his profession, as more certain means of attaining the independence and leisure of which he was desirous. This frigid reception extracted immediately from Chatterton, "a peevish letter," desiring the manuscripts back, as they were the property of another; and Mr. Walpole, either offended at the warm and independent spirit which was manifested by the boy, or pleased to be disengaged from the business in so easy a manner, proceeded on a journey to Paris, without taking any further notice of him. On his return, which was not for some time, he found another epistle from Chatterton, in a style (as he terms it) "singularly impertinent;" expressive of much resentment

ment on account of the detention of his poems, roughly demanding them back, and adding, "that Mr. Walpole would not have *dared* to use him so ill, had he not been acquainted with the narrowness of his circumstances." The consequence was, therefore, such as might be expected. Mr. Walpole returned his poems and his letters in a blank cover, and never afterwards heard from him or of him during his life *. The affront was never forgiven by the disappointed poet, though it is perhaps more than repaid by the ridiculous portrait which he has exhibited of Mr. W——, in the Memoirs of a Sad Dog, under the character of "the redoubted Baron Otranto †, who has spent his whole life in conjectures."

On the score of these transactions, Mr. Walpole has incurred more censure than

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* *Ib.* passim.

† Chat. Miscel. p. 184.

he really deserved. In an age when literature is so little patronized by those who wield all the powers of the state, and have in trust for the public the distribution of its emoluments; when men of the first abilities, actually engaged in the learned professions, are permitted to languish in obscurity and poverty, without any of those rewards, which are *appropriated* to the professions they exercise, and are compelled to depend for a precarious subsistence on the scanty pittance, which they derive from diurnal drudgery in the service of booksellers, it can scarcely be deemed an instance of extraordinary illiberality that a private man, though a man of fortune, should be inattentive to the petition of a perfect stranger, a young man, whose birth or education entitled him to no high pretensions, and who had only conceived an unreasonable dislike to a profession both lucrative and respectable. If Chatterton

had actually avowed the poems, perhaps a very generous and feeling heart, such as rarely exists at present, and least of all in the higher circles of life, might have been more strongly affected with their beauties, and might probably have extended some small degree of encouragement. But considering things as they are, and not as they ought to be, it was a degree of unusual condescension to take any notice whatever of the application ; and when Chatterton felt so poignantly his disappointment, he only demonstrated his ignorance of the state of patronage in this country, and acted like a young and ingenuous person, who judged of the feelings of courtiers by the generous emotions of his own breast, or the practice of times, which exist now only in the records of romance. Mr. Walpole afterwards regretted, and I believe sincerely, that he had not seen this extraordinary youth, and that he did not pay a

more favourable attention to his correspondence; but, to be neglected in life, and regretted and admired when these passions can be no longer of service, has been the usual fate of learning and genius. Mr. Walpole was certainly under no obligation of patronizing Chatterton. To have encouraged and befriended him, would have been an exertion of liberality and munificence uncommon in the present day; but to ascribe to Mr. Walpole's neglect (if it can even merit so harsh an appellation) the dreadful catastrophe, which happened at the distance of nearly two years after, would be the highest degree of injustice and absurdity*.

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* A learned and respectable friend, on reading these memoirs in manuscript, favoured me with the following able vindication of Mr. W. which, for the satisfaction of those who wish for the fullest information on the subject, I insert entire.

It has already been stated, that, in March 1769, Chatterton, not long after his acquaintance with Mr. Barrett
and

The reader has hitherto contemplated Chatterton in the pleasing light of an ingenious

and Mr. Catcott, to whom he had communicated some originals and some transcripts of Rowley's Poems, wrote a letter to Mr. H. Walpole, inclosing also a specimen of the poems, and soliciting his patronage. Let the reader take the account in Mr. Walpole's own words, from an extract of a letter to Mr. W. B. added to another letter to the Editor of Chatterton's Miscellanies, and printed at Strawberry-hill, 1779.

“ I am far from determined to publish any thing about
“ Chatterton. It would almost look like making myself a
“ party. I do not love controversy ; if I print, my chief
“ reason would be, that both in the account of the poems,
“ and in Mr. Warton's last volume, my name has been
“ brought in with so little circumspection and accuracy,
“ that it looks as if my rejection of Chatterton had driven
“ him to despair ; whereas I was the first person on whom
“ he essayed his art and ambition, instead of being the
“ last. I never saw him ; there was an interval of near two
“ years between his application to me and his dismal end ;
“ nor had he quitted his master, nor was necessitous, nor
“ otherwise poor than attornies clerks usually are ; nor had
“ he come to London, nor launched into dissipation, when
“ his correspondence with me stopped. As faithfully as I
“ can recollect the circumstances, without dates, and
“ without searching for what few memorandums I pre-
“ served relative to him, I will recapitulate his history
“ with me. Bathurst, my bookseller, brought me a
“ packet left with him ; it contained an ode, or little
“ poem,

nious and virtuous youth. I reluctantly proceed to develop the only circumstance which

“ poem, of two or three stanzas in alternate rhyme, on the
“ death of Richard the First, and I was told, in very few
“ lines, that it had been found at Bristol, with many other
“ old poems, and that the possessor could furnish me with
“ accounts of a series of great painters, who had flourished
“ at Bristol.

“ Here I must pause, to mention my own reflections.
“ At first I concluded that somebody having met with my
“ Anecdotes of Painting, had a mind to laugh at me ; I
“ thought not very ingenuously, as I was not likely to
“ swallow a succession of great painters at Bristol. The
“ ode, or sonnet*, as I think it was called, was too pretty
“ to be part of the plan ; and, as is easy with all the other
“ supposed poems of Rowley, it was not difficult to make it
“ modern by changing the old words for new, though yet
“ more difficult than with most of them. You see I tell you
“ fairly the case.

“ I wrote, according to the inclosed direction, for farther
“ particulars. Chatterton, in answer, informed me that
“ he was the son of a poor widow, who supported him with
“ great difficulty ; that he was clerk or apprentice to an at-
“ torney, but had a taste and turn for more elegant studies ;
“ and hinted a wish that I would assist him with my interest
“ in emerging out of so dull a profession, by procuring
“ him some place, in which he could pursue his natural
“ bent. He affirmed that great treasures of ancient poetry
“ had

* “ Richard of Lyon's Heart to fight is gone.”

which has involved his name and character in disgrace, and which certainly deprived

“ had been discovered in his native city, and were in the
 “ hands of a *person*, who had lent him those he had transmitted to me ; for he now sent me others, amongst which
 “ was an absolute modern pastoral in dialogue, thinly
 “ sprinkled with old words *. Pray observe, Sir, that he
 “ affirmed having received the poems from another person ;
 “ whereas it is ascertained that the gentleman at Bristol,
 “ who possesses the fund of Rowley’s poems, received them
 “ from Chatterton.

“ I wrote to a relation of mine at Bath, to enquire into
 “ the situation and character of Chatterton, according to
 “ his own account of himself ; nothing was returned about
 “ his character, but his story was verified.

“ In the mean time I communicated the poems to Mr.
 “ Gray and Mr. Mason, who at once pronounced them
 “ forgeries, and declared there was no symptom in them of
 “ their being the productions of near so distant an age ; the
 “ language and metres being totally unlike any thing ancient.

“ Well, Sir, being satisfied with my intelligence about
 “ Chatterton, I wrote him a letter with as much kindness
 “ and tenderness as if I had been his guardian ; for though
 “ I had no doubt of his impositions, such a spirit of poetry
 “ breathed in his coinage, as interested me for him ; nor
 “ was it a grave crime in a young bard to have forged false
 “ notes of hand, that were to pass current only in the parish
 “ of

prived the world prematurely of his excellent abilities. When or how he was unfortunate

“ of Parnassus. I undeceived him about my being a person
 “ of any interest, and urged, that in duty and gratitude to
 “ his mother, who had straitened herself to breed him up to
 “ a profession, he ought to labour in it, that in her old age
 “ he might absolve his filial debt; and I told him, that
 “ when he should have made a fortune, he might unbend
 “ himself with the studies consonant to his inclinations. I
 “ told him also, that I had communicated his transcripts to
 “ better judges, and that they were by no means satisfied
 “ with the authenticity of his supposed MSS. He wrote
 “ me rather a peevish answer, said he could not contest with
 “ a person of my learning, (a compliment by no means due
 “ to me, and which I certainly had not assumed, having
 “ mentioned my having consulted abler judges,) maintained the genuineness of the poems, and demanded to
 “ have them returned, *as they were the property of another*
 “ *gentleman.* Remember this. -

“ When I received this letter, I was going to Paris in a
 “ day or two, and either forgot his request of the poems,
 “ or perhaps not having time to have them copied,
 “ deferred complying till my return, which was to be in
 “ six weeks. I protest I do not remember which was the
 “ case; and yet, though in a cause of so little importance,
 “ I will not utter a syllable of which I am not positively
 “ certain, nor will not charge my memory with a tittle beyond what it retains. Soon after my return from France,
 “ I received another letter from Chatterton, the style of
 “ which was singularly impertinent. He demanded his
 “ poems

fortunate enough to receive a tincture of infidelity, we are not informed. Early in the

“ poems roughly ; and added, that I should not have dared
“ to use him so ill, if he had not acquainted me with the
“ narrowness of his circumstances. My heart did not accuse
“ me of insolence to him. I wrote an answer to him, ex-
“ postulating with him on his injustice, and renewing good
“ advice ; but upon second thoughts, reflecting that so
“ wrong-headed a young man, of whom I knew nothing,
“ and whom I had never seen, might be absurd enough to
“ print my letter, I flung it into the fire ; and wrapping up
“ both his poems and letters, without taking a copy of
“ either, for which I am now sorry, I returned all to him,
“ and thought no more about him or them, till about a year
“ and a half after, when dining at the Royal Academy,
“ Dr. Goldsmith drew the attention of the company with
“ an account of a marvellous treasure of ancient poems
“ lately discovered at Bristol, and expressed enthusiastic be-
“ lief in them, for which he was laughed at by Dr. John-
“ son, who was present. I soon found this was the trou-
“ vaille of my friend Chatterton ; and I told Dr. Goldsmith
“ that this novelty was none to me, who might, if I had
“ pleased, have had the honour of ushering the great dis-
“ covery to the learned world. You may imagine, Sir,
“ we did not at all agree in the measure of our faith ; but
“ though his credulity diverted me, my mirth was soon
“ dashed ; for on asking about Chatterton, he told me he
“ had been in London, and had destroyed himself. I
“ heartily wished then that I had been the dupe of all the
“ poor young man had written to me ; for who would not
“ have

the year 1769, it appears from a poem on Happiness, addressed to Mr. Catcott, that
he

“ have his understanding imposed upon to save a fellow
 “ being from the utmost wretchedness, despair, and suicide !
 “ and a poor young man, not eighteen, and of such miracu-
 “ lous talents ; for, dear Sir, if I wanted credulity on
 “ one hand, it is ample on the other. Yet heap all the
 “ improbabilities you please on the head of Chatterton, the
 “ impossibility on Rowley’s side will remain. An amazing
 “ genius for poetry, which one of them possessed, might
 “ flash out in the darkest age ; but could Rowley anticipate
 “ the phraseology of the eighteenth century ? His poetic
 “ fire might burst through the obstacles of the times ; like
 “ Homer, or other original bards, he might have formed
 “ a poetical style ; but would it have been precisely that
 “ of an age subsequent to him by some hundred years ?
 “ Nobody can admire the poetry of the poems in question
 “ more than I do, but except being better than most mo-
 “ dern verses, in what do they differ in the construction ?
 “ The words are old, the construction evidently of yester-
 “ day ; and, by substituting modern words, aye, single
 “ words, to the old, or to those invented by Chatterton,
 “ in what do they differ ? Try that method with any com-
 “ position, even in prose, of the reign of Henry VI. and
 “ see if the consequence will be the same. But I am get-
 “ ting into the controversy, instead of concluding my nar-
 “ rative, which indeed is ended.”

Whatever imputation might have lain on Mr. Walpole with regard to the treatment of Chatterton, before these particulars were known, and this narrative appeared, surely there

he had drank deeply of the poisoned
spring: And in the conclusion of a letter
to

there can be no impartial reader of it who will not acquit him of any ill treatment of a person who appeared to him in so questionable a shape; and allow that in Mr. Walpole's situation, he could scarcely have acted otherwise than he did. For what was the case? A youth of sixteen years of age, clerk to an attorney at Bristol, totally unknown to Mr. Walpole, sends him a letter, acquainting him that the writer, though bred to the law, had a taste for politer studies, particularly poetry, and wished to be drawn out of his present situation, and placed in one more at his ease, where he might pursue the studies more congenial to his taste and genius; but of this taste and genius he produces no other proof than transcripts of some old poems, said to have been found at Bristol, and to be *the property of another person*. These poems being exhibited by Mr. Walpole to Mr. Gray and Mr. Mason, these excellent and impartial judges agreed in opinion that they must be modern productions, disguised in antiquated phrases; and, with regard to a long list of Bristol artists, carvers and painters, announced also as part of this treasure, Mr. Walpole was as confident that none such ever had any existence, and therefore he could not help concluding that the whole was a fiction, contrived by some one or more literary wags, who wished to impose on his credulity, and to laugh at him if they succeeded, and that Chatterton was only the instrument employed to introduce and recommend these old writings. His youth and situation could not lead Mr. Walpole to suppose he was himself the author and contriver, more especially as he had
asserted

to the same gentleman, after he left Bristol, he expresses himself: " Heaven send
you

asserted them to be the property of a person at Bristol then alive. He had indeed represented himself as a lover of the muses, but had given no specimens of his *own* compositions: The kindest thing therefore Mr. Walpole could do for a young man in this situation, was, after a gentle hint of his suspicions of the authenticity of the poems, to recommend to his correspondent to pursue the line of business in which he was placed, as most likely to secure a decent maintenance for himself, and enable him to assist his mother. However disappointed Chatterton might have been at the time, and angry with Mr. Walpole for this rebuff, it should seem as if he had not harboured any long or strong resentment against that gentleman; for in a copy of verses addressed to Miss M. R. and sent by him to the Town and Country Magazine, and printed in the Number for January 1770, is the following stanza:

" Yet when that bloom and dancing fire,
" In silver'd reverence shall expire,
" Aged, wrinkled, and defac'd,
" To keep one lover's flame alive
" Requires the genius of a *Clive*,
" With WALPOLE's mental taste.

See Chatterton's Miscellanies, p. 88.

It should seem also, that Chatterton had in part adopted Mr. Walpole's advice, by continuing with his master a full twelvemonth after his application to that gentleman. Then
he

you the comforts of Christianity; I request them not, for I am no Christian."

Infidelity,

he got dismissed from his master and went to London, in full confidence that his literary talents would find ample employment and encouragement from the London booksellers; but being disappointed in his expectation, the fatal conclusion which has just been mentioned took place. Had this been the case immediately on his receipt of Mr. Walpole's last letter, some shadow of foundation might have appeared for the harsh censures passed on Mr. Walpole's treatment of this ill-fated youth; though even then, no real one, all circumstances considered.

From the spirited reply of Mr. Walpole to one of these censurers, (the Editor of Chatterton's Miscellanies,) and printed in the same pamphlet as the letter to W. B. the following extract is given, as equally applicable to all objectors.

" Was it the part of a just man to couple Chatterton's
 " first unsuccessful application with his fatal exit; and load
 " me with both? Does your enthusiastic admiration of
 " his abilities, or your regrets for the honour of England's
 " poetry, warrant such a concatenation of ideas? Was
 " poor Chatterton so modest, or so desponding, as to abandon
 " his enterprizes on their being damped by me? Did
 " he not continue to pursue them? Is this country so destitute
 " of patrons of genius, or do I move in so eminent and
 " distinguished a sphere, that a repulse from me is a dagger
 " to talents? Did not Chatterton come to London after
 " that miscarriage? Did he relinquish his counterfeiting
 " propensity on its being lost on me? Was he an inoffen-

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" five

Infidelity, or scepticism at least, may be termed the disease of young, lively, and half-informed minds. There is something like

“ five ingenuous youth, smit with the love of the muses,
 “ and soaring above a sordid and servile profession, whose
 “ early blossoms being blighted by my insolence, withered
 “ in mortified obscurity, and on seeing his hopes of fame
 “ blasted, sunk beneath the frowns of ignorant and insolent
 “ wealth? or did he, after launching into all the excesses
 “ you describe, and vainly hoping to gratify his ambition
 “ by adulation to, or satires on all ranks and parties of
 “ men, fall a victim to his own ungovernable spirit, and to
 “ the deplorable straits to which he had reduced himself?
 “ The interval was short, I own; but as every moment of
 “ so extraordinary a life was crowded with efforts of his enterprising
 “ genius, allow me to say with truth, that there
 “ was a large chasm between his application to me and his
 “ miserable conclusion. You know there was; and though
 “ my falling into his snare might have varied the æra of
 “ his exploits, it is more likely that that success would
 “ rather have encouraged than checked his enterprises.
 “ When he pursued his turn for fabricating ancient writings,
 “ in spite of the mortification he received from me, it is
 “ not probable that he would have been corrected by success;
 “ such is not the nature of success, when it is the
 “ reward of artifice. I should be more justly reproachable
 “ for having contributed to cherish an impostor, than I am
 “ for having accelerated his fate. I cannot repeat the
 “ words without emotions of indignation on my own account,
 “ and of compassion on his.” O.

like discovery in the rejection of truths to which they have been from infancy in trammels. A little learning, too, misleads the understanding, in an opinion of its own powers. When we have acquired the outlines of science, we are apt to suppose that every thing is within our comprehension. Much study and much information are required to discover the difficulties in which the systems of infidels are involved. There are profound, as well as popular arguments, in favour of revealed religion ; but when the flippancy of Voltaire or Hume has taught young persons to suppose that they have defeated the former, their understandings seldom recover sufficient vigour to pursue the latter with the ability and perseverance of a Newton or a Bryant.

The evil effect of these principles upon the morals of youth, is often found to survive the speculative impressions which they

have made on the intellect. Wretched is that person, who, in the ardour and impetuosity of youth, finds himself released from all the salutary restraints of duty and religion; wretched is he, who, deprived of all the comforting hopes of another state, is reduced to seek for happiness in the vicious gratifications of this life; who, under such delusions, acquires habits of profligacy or discontent! The progress, however, from speculative to practical irreligion, is not so rapid as is commonly supposed. The greatest advantage of a strict and orderly education is the resistance which virtuous habits, early acquired, oppose to the allurements of vice. Those who have sullied the youth of Chatterton with the imputation of extraordinary vices or irregularities, and have asserted, that "his profligacy was, at least, as conspicuous as his abilities*," have, I conceive, rather grounded these assertions
on

* Preface to Chatterton's Miscellanies, p. 18.

on the apparently profane and immoral tendency of some of his productions, than on personal knowledge or a correct review of his conduct. During his residence at Bristol, we have the most respectable evidence in favour of the regularity of his conduct, namely, that of his master, Mr. Lambert. Of few young men in his situation it can be said, that during a course of nearly three years, he seldom encroached upon the strict limits which were assigned him, with respect to his hours of liberty; that his master could never accuse him of improper behaviour, and that he had the utmost reason to be satisfied he never spent his hours of leisure in any but respectable company.

Mrs. Newton, with that unaffected simplicity which so eminently characterises her letter, most powerfully controverts the obloquy which had been thrown upon her brother's memory. She says, that while he was at Mr. Lambert's, he visited

his mother regularly most evenings before nine o'clock, and they were seldom two evenings together without seeing him. He was for a considerable time remarkably indifferent to females. He declared to his sister, that he had always seen the whole sex with perfect indifference, except those whom nature had rendered dear. He remarked, at the same time, the tendency of severe study to sour the temper, and indicated his inclination to form an acquaintance with a young female in the neighbourhood, apprehending that it might soften that austerity of temper which had resulted from solitary study. The juvenile Petrarch wanted a Laura, to polish his manners and exercise his fancy. He addressed a poem to Miss Rumsey; and they commenced, Mrs. Newton adds, a corresponding acquaintance. "He would also frequently," she says, "walk the College Green with the young girls that stately paraded there to shew their finery;"

finery * ;” but she is persuaded that the reports which charge him with libertinism are ill-founded †. She could not perhaps have added a better proof of it, than his inclination to associate with modest women. The testimony of Mr. Thistlethwaite is not less explicit or less honourable to Chatterton. “ The opportunities,” says he, “ which a long acquaintance with him

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afforded

* In a letter from London to his sister, he particularizes ten Bristol females of his acquaintance, and adds, “ I promised to write to some hundreds, I believe ; but what with writing for publications, and going to places of public diversion, which is as absolutely necessary to me as my food, I find but little time to write to you.” O.

† Mrs. Newton’s letter. I cannot help remarking a pleasant mistake of the Dean of Exeter : The orthography of Mrs. N. in the letter printed in *Love and Madness*, is not the most correct. Her words are, “ I really believe he was no debauchee (though some have reported it) ; the dear unhappy boy had faults enough, I saw with concern ; he was proud and exceedingly imperious, but that of *venality* he could not be justly accused with.” It is easy to see that Mrs. N. by *venality* means libertinism ; but the Dean taking the word in the usual sense, makes use of it to disprove, what is seldom suspected of a poet, and least of all of Chatterton, that he was avaricious.

afforded me, justify me in saying, that whilst he lived at Bristol, he was not the debauched character he has been represented. Temperate in his living, moderate in his pleasures, and regular in his exercises, he was undeserving of the aspersions. I admit that amongst his papers may be found many passages, not only immoral, but bordering upon a libertinism gross and unpardonable. It is not my intention to attempt a vindication of those passages, which, for the regard I bear his memory, I wish he had never written, but which I nevertheless believe to have originated rather from a warmth of imagination, aided by a vain affectation of singularity, than from any natural depravity, or from a heart vitiated by evil example*."

But

* Milles's Rowley, p. 461. Whether the following passage from Chatterton's Kew Gardens (a poem not published in any of the collections of his works) be received as a confirmation of his friend's testimony in his favour, or the contrary,

But though it may not always be the effect of infidel principles, to plunge the person who becomes unfortunately infected with them into an immediate course of flagrant and shameless depravity, they seldom

trary, it is, however, worth preserving. An officious friend is introduced accosting him in the following lines :

- “ Is there a street within this spacious place,
- “ That boasts the happiness of one fair face,
- “ Whose conversation does not turn on you ?
- “ Blaming your wild amours, and morals too.
- “ Oaths, sacred and tremendous oaths you swear,
- “ Oaths which might shock a L——’s soul to hear ;
- “ Whilst the too tender and believing maid,
- “ Remember pretty —— is betray’d.
- “ Then your religion !—oh, beware ! beware !
- “ Although a Deist is no monster here,
- “ Think not the merit of a jingling song
- “ Can countenance the author’s acting wrong.
- “ Reform your manners, and with solemn air,
- “ Hear Catcott bray, and Robins squeak in prayer.
- “ Damn’d narrow notions, notions which disgrace
- “ The boasted freedom of the human race ;
- “ Bristol may keep her prudent maxims still,
- “ I scorn her prudence, and I ever will.
- “ Since all my vices magnified are here,
- “ She cannot paint me worse than I appear.
- “ When raving in the lunacy of ink,
- “ I catch the pen, and publish what I think.” O.

dom fail to unhinge the mind, and render it the sport of some passion, unfriendly to our happiness and prosperity. One of their first effects in Chatterton was to render the idea of suicide familiar, and to dispose him to think lightly of the most sacred deposit with which man is entrusted by his Creator. It has been supposed that his violent death in London, was the sudden or almost instant effect of extreme poverty and disappointment. It appears, however, that long before he left Bristol, he had repeatedly intimated to the servants of Mr. Lambert, his intention of putting an end to his existence. Mr. Lambert's mother was particularly terrified, but she was unable to persuade her son of the reality of his threats, till he found by accident upon his desk a paper, entitled, the "Last Will and Testament of Thomas Chatterton *," in which he seriously indicated

* See the Will in the Appendix to Chatterton's Misc.

cated his design of committing suicide on the following day, namely, Easter Sunday, April 15th, 1770. The paper was probably rather the result of temporary uneasiness *, than of that fixed aversion to his situation which he constantly manifested; but with principles and passions such as Chatterton displayed, Mr. Lambert considered it as no longer prudent, after so decisive a proof, to continue him in the house; he accordingly dismissed him immediately from his service, in which he had continued two years, nine months, and thirteen days.

If there was any sincerity in the intentions of committing suicide, which he expressed in the paper above alluded to, he was diverted from it for the present by the golden prospects with which he flattered himself from a new plan of life, on which he
entered

* I have been informed from good authority, that it was occasioned by the refusal of a gentleman, whom he had occasionally complimented in his poems, to accommodate him with a supply of money.

entered with his usual enthusiasm. A few months before he left Bristol, he had written letters to several bookfellers in London *, “ who,” Mr. Thistlethwaite says, “ finding him of advantage to them in their publications, were by no means sparing of their praises and compliments ; adding the most liberal promises of assistance and employment, should he choose to make London the place of his residence †.” To the interrogatories of this gentleman concerning the plan of life which he intended to pursue on his arrival at London, his answer was remarkable, and corresponds with what has been just related. “ My first attempt,” said he, “ shall be in the literary way : The promises I have received are sufficient to dispel doubt ; but should I, contrary to my expectation, find myself deceived, I will in that case turn Methodist preacher : Credulity is as potent a deity as ever, and a
new

* Mrs. Newton’s Letter.

† Milles’s Rowley, p. 460. •

new sect may easily be devised. But if that too should fail me, my last and final resource is a pistol."

Before he quitted Bristol, he had entered deeply into politics, and had embraced what was termed the patriotic party. In March 1770, he wrote a satirical poem, called "Kew Gardens," consisting of above 1300 lines. This he transmitted, in different packets, to Mr. George William Edmunds, No. 73, Shoe-lane, Printer of a patriotic newspaper. At the bottom of the first packet, which contained about 300 lines, written in Chatterton's own hand, is this postscript. "Mr. Edmunds will send the author, Thomas Chatterton, twenty of the Journals, in which the above poem (which I shall continue) shall appear, by the machine, if he thinks proper to put it in; the money shall be paid to his orders." The poem is a satire on the Princess Dowager of Wales,
Lord

Lord Bute, and their Friends in London and Bristol, but particularly on those in Bristol, who had distinguished themselves in favour of the Ministry. His signature on this occasion was DECIMUS ; but whether the poem was ever printed or not, I have not been able to ascertain. I have been also informed of another political satire of near 600 lines, the manuscript of which, in Chatterton's hand-writing, is in the possession of a friend of Mr. Catcott. It is called "The Whore of Babylon." The satire of this poem is also directed against the Ministry, and, like the former, it includes several of the Bristol people, not excepting Mr. George Catcott, and his brother the clergyman. But his party efforts were not confined altogether to poetry ; he wrote an invective in prose against Bishop Newton, also signed Decimus, which, I believe, appeared in some of the periodical publications of the times.

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The manuscript of this letter is in Mr. Catcott's possession ; but the style appears much inferior to that of his prose publications posterior to his arrival in London. To write well in prose is perhaps more the effect of art, of study, and of habit, than of natural genius. The rules of metrical composition are fewer, more simple, and require a less constant exercise of the judgment. In the infancy of societies, as well as of individuals, therefore, the art of poetry is antecedent to those of rhetoric and criticism, and arrives at perfection long before the language of prose attains that degree of strength, conciseness, and harmony, which is requisite to satisfy a delicate ear. Chatterton wrote also an indecent satirical poem, called "The Exhibition," occasioned by the improper behaviour of a person in Bristol. The satire of this poem is chiefly local, and the characters of most of the surgeons in Bristol

are delineated in it. Some descriptive passages in this poem have great merit. Thus, speaking of a favourite organist, probably Mr. Allen, he says :

“ He keeps the passions with the sound in play,
“ And the soul trembles with the trembling key *.”

There are a number of other unpublished works of his dispersed in the hands of different persons. The activity of his mind is indeed almost unparalleled. But our surprise must decrease, when we consider that he slept but little ; and that his whole attention was directed to literary pursuits ; for he declares himself so ignorant of his profession, that he was unable to draw out a clearance from his apprenticeship, which Mr. Lambert demanded †. He was also unfettered by the study of the dead languages, which usually absorb much of

* Love and Madness, p. 167.

† See the third letter of Chatterton, published in Love and Madness, p. 198.

of the time and attention of young persons ; and though they may be useful to the attainment of correctness, perhaps they do not much contribute to fluency in writing. Mr. Catcott declared, that when he first knew Chatterton, he was ignorant even of Grammar *.

There are three great æras in the life of Chatterton, his admission into Colston's school, his being put apprentice to Mr. Lambert, and his expedition to London. In the latter end of April, 1770, he bade his native city (from which he had never previously been absent further than he could walk in half a Sunday) *a final adieu* †. In a letter to his mother, dated April 26th, he describes in a lively style the little adventures of his journey, and his reception from his patrons, the book-fellers and printers with whom he had

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* From the information of Mr. Seward.

† Love and Madness, p. 191.

corresponded ; these were Mr. Edmunds, whom I lately had occasion to mention as a noted patriotic printer at that period ; Mr. Fell, publisher of the Freeholder's Magazine ; Mr. Hamilton, proprietor of the Town and Country ; and Mr. Doddsley, of Pall-Mall. From all of them he professes to have received great encouragement, adding, that all approved of his design, and that he should probably be soon settled. In the same letter, he desires his mother to call upon Mr. Lambert. "Shew him this," says he, with uncommon dignity and spirit, "or tell him, if I deserve a recommendation, he would oblige me to give me one—if I do not, it would be beneath him to take notice of me*."

His first habitation after his arrival in London was at Mr. Walmfley's, a plaisterer in Shoreditch, to whom he was introduced by a relation of his, a Mrs. Ballance, who

* Love and Madness, p. 192.

who resided in the same house. Of his first establishment, his report is favourable. "I am settled," says he, in a letter to his mother, dated May 6th, "and in such a settlement as I could desire. I get four guineas a month by one magazine; shall engage to write a history of England, and other pieces, which will more than double that sum. Occasional essays for the daily papers would more than support me. What a glorious prospect *!" In consequence of his engagements with the different magazines, we find him, about the same time, soliciting communications from his poetical and literary friends at Bristol, and desiring them to read the Freeholder's Magazine. In a letter dated the 14th of the same month, he writes in the same high flow of spirits: He speaks of the great encouragement which genius meets with in London; adding, with exultation,

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" If

* Love and Madness, p. 197.

“ If Rowley had been a Londoner instead of a Bristowyan, I might have lived by copying his works. *” He exhorts his sister to “ improve in copying music, drawing, and every thing which requires genius ;” observing that although, “ in Bristol’s mercantile style, those things may be useless, if not a detriment to her ; *here* they are very profitable †.” His engagements at that period indeed appear to have been numerous ; for besides his employment in the magazines, he speaks of a connection which he had formed with a doctor in music, to write songs for Ranelagh, Vauxhall, &c. ; and in a letter of the 30th to his sister, he mentions another with a Scottish bookseller, to compile a voluminous history of London, to appear in numbers, for which he was to have

* Yet it does not appear that any of Rowley’s pieces were exhibited after C. left Bristol. O.

† Love and Madness, p. 201.

have his board at the bookseller's house, and a handsome premium*.

Party writing, however, seems to have been one of his favourite employments. It was agreeable to the satirical turn of his disposition, and it gratified his vanity, by the prospect of elevating him into immediate notice. When his relation, Mrs. Ballance, recommended it to him to endeavour to get into some office, he stormed like a madman, and alarmed the good old lady in no inconsiderable degree, by telling her, "he hoped, with the blessing of God, very soon to be sent prisoner to the Tower, which would make his fortune." In his second letter to his mother from London, he says, "Mr. Wilkes knew me by my writings, since I first

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* *Love and Madness*, p. 202. The Editor of Chatterton's *Miscellanies* confounds this with Northook's History of London; but that gentleman, in a letter printed in the *St. James's Chronicle*, denies having ever had the least knowledge of C. Indeed the scheme above alluded to appears not to have been proceeded in.

corresponded with the booksellers here. I shall visit him next week, and by his interest will insure Mrs. Ballance the Trinity House. He affirmed that what Mr. Fell had of mine could not be the writings of a youth, and expressed a desire to know the author. By means of another bookseller, I shall be introduced to Townshend and Sawbridge. I am quite familiar at the Chapter Coffee-house, and know all the geniusses there. A character is now unnecessary; an author carries his character in his pen*." He informs his sister that, if money flowed as fast upon him as honours, he would give her a portion of five thousand pounds. This extraordinary elevation of spirits arose from an introduction to the celebrated patriotic Lord Mayor, W. Beckford. Chatterton had, it seems, addressed an essay to him, which was so well received, that it encouraged him to wait

* Love and Madness, p. 194.

upon his Lordship, in order to obtain his approbation to address a second letter to him, on the subject of the city remonstrance, and its reception. "His Lordship (adds he) received me as politely as a citizen could, and warmly invited me to call on him again. The rest is a secret." His inclination doubtless led him to espouse the party of opposition; but he complains, that "no money is to be got on that side the question; interest is on the other side. But he is a poor author who cannot write on both sides. I believe I may be introduced (and if I am not, I'll introduce myself) to a ruling power in the Court party*." When Beckford died, he is said to have been almost frantic†, and to have exclaimed, that he was ruined. The elegy, however, in which he has celebrated him‡,

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contains

* Love and Madness, p. 203.

† Ibid. p. 214.

‡ Chat. Miscel. p. 76.

contains more of frigid praise, than of ardent feeling; nor is there in it a single line which appears to flow from the heart. Indeed, that he was serious in his intention of writing on both sides, is evident from a list of pieces written by Chatterton, but never published, which Mr. Walpole has preserved. No. V. of these pieces is a letter to Lord North, dated May 26th, 1770, signed *Moderator*, and beginning, "My Lord, It gives me a painful pleasure, &c." It contains, as Mr. Walpole informs us, an encomium on Administration for rejecting the City Remonstrance. On the other hand, No. VI. is a letter to the Lord Mayor, Beckford, (probably that which he desired his permission to address to him). It is also dated May 26, signed *Probus*, and contains a virulent invective against Government for rejecting the Remonstrance, beginning, "When the endeavours of a spirited people to free themselves

selfes from insupportable slavery, &c.” On the back of this essay, which is directed to Mr. Cary, a particular friend of Chatterton in Bristol, is this indorsement: “Accepted by Bingley—set for, and thrown out of the North Briton, 21st June, on account of the Lord Mayor’s death.

Lost by his death on this Essay,	£. 1 11 6
Gained in Elegies,	£. 2 2 0
—— In Essays,	3 3 0
	<hr/> 5 5 0
Am glad he is dead by	— £. 3 13 6*

“Essays,” again says he to his sister, “on the patriotic side, fetch no more than what the copy is sold for. As the patriots themselves are searching for a place, they have no gratuities to spare. On the other hand, unpopular essays will not even be accepted, and you must pay to have them printed;

* Two letters printed at Strawberry-hill.

printed; but then you seldom lose by it. Courtiers are so sensible of their deficiency in merit, that they generally reward all who know how to daub them with an appearance of it*." Either Chatterton, on this occasion, spoke from hear-say, or there is reason to believe that the ministerial arrangements are greatly altered in this respect, and that most of the late administrations have found a more effectual, if a more expensive support, from a venal majority in the House, than from a venal phalanx of mendicant authors in the daily papers.

On this sandy foundation of party writing Chatterton erected a visionary fabric of future greatness; and, in the waking dreams of a poetical imagination, he was already a man of considerable public importance. It was a common assertion with him, " that he would settle the nation before he had

* Love and Madness, p. 204.

had done*.” In a letter to his sister of the 20th July, he tells her, “ My company is courted every where ; and, could I humble myself to go into a compter, could have had twenty places before now ; but I must be among the great ; state matters suit me better than commercial†.” In a former letter he intimates, that he “ might have had a recommendation to Sir George Colebrooke, an East-India Director, as qualified for an office no ways despicable, but,” he adds, “ I shall not take a step to the sea, whilst I can continue on land‡.” His taste for dissipation seems to have kept pace with the increase of his vanity. To frequent places of public amusement, he accounts as necessary to him as food. “ I employ my money,” says he, “ now in fitting myself fashionably, and getting into

* Love and Madness, p. 214.

† Ibid. p. 210.

‡ Ibid. p. 203.

|| Ibid. p. 200.

into good company; this last article always brings me in interest*.”

While engaged in the examination of these curious letters, it is impossible not to be attracted by a remarkable passage. Chatterton informs his mother in the letter of May 14th, “A gentleman, who knows me at the Chapter, as an author, would have introduced me as a companion to the young Duke of Northumberland, in his intended general tour; but, alas! I speak no tongue but my own†.” It is not very credible, that any of the constant frequenters of the Chapter Coffee-house should be possessed of influence sufficient to recommend a person to the Duke of Northumberland, to so important an office as that of the care of his son; much less credible is it, that such a person would recommend a young literary adventurer, whose

* Love and Madness, p. 202.

† Ibid. p. 198.

whose character was only known by an accidental meeting at a coffee-house; and least credible of all it is, that such a person was likely to be accepted on so slender a ground of recommendation. It is no unfrequent sport with little minds to play with the sanguine tempers and expectations of young and unexperienced minds: Poor Chatterton had tolerable experience of these prodigal promisers, from the patriotic Beckford to his pretended patron at the Chapter Coffee-house.

The splendid visions of promotion and consequence however soon vanished, and our adventurer found no patrons but the bookfellers; and even here he seems not to have escaped the poignant sting of disappointment. Soon after his arrival in London, he writes to his mother, "The poverty of authors is a common observation, but not always a true one. No author can be poor who understands the
arts

arts of booksellers ; without this necessary knowledge the greatest genius may starve, and with it the greatest dunce may live in splendour. This knowledge I have pretty well dipped into *." This knowledge, however, instead of conducting to opulence and independence, proved a delusive guide ; and though he boasts of having pieces in the month of June 1770 in the Gospel Magazine, the Town and Country, the Court and City, the London, the Political Register, &c. and that almost the whole Town and Country for the following month was his †, yet it appears, so scanty is the remuneration for those periodical labours, that even these uncommon exertions of industry and genius were insufficient to ward off the approach of poverty ; and he seems to have sunk almost at once from the highest elevation of hope and illusion,

to

* Love and Madness, p. 195.

† Ibid. p. 210.

to the depths of despair. Early in July he removed his lodgings from Shoreditch to Mrs. Angel's, a sack-maker in Brook-street, Holborn. Mr. Walmsley's family affirmed that he assigned no reason for quitting their house. The author of *Love and Madness* attributes the change to the necessity he was under, from the nature of his employments, of frequenting public places *. Is it not probable that he might remove, lest his friends in Shoreditch, who had heard his frequent boasts, and observed his dream of greatness, should be the spectators of his approaching indigence? Pride was the ruling passion of Chatterton, and a too acute sense of shame is ever found to accompany literary pride. But however he might be desirous of preserving appearances to the world, he was sufficiently lowered in his own expectations; and great indeed must have been his

* *Love and Madness*, p. 189.

his humiliation, when we find his towering ambition reduced to the miserable hope of securing the very ineligible appointment of a surgeon's mate to Africa. To his friend Mr. Barrett he applied in his distress for a recommendation to this unpromising station. Even in this dreary prospect he was not, however, without the consolations of his muse; his fancy delighted itself with the expectation of contemplating the wonders of a country, where "Nature flourishes in her most perfect vigour; where the *purple* aloe, and the scarlet jessamine, diffuse their rich perfumes; where the reeking tygers bask in the sedges, or wanton with their shadows in the stream."*

His resolution was announced in a poem to Miss Bush,† in the style of Cowley, that is, with too much affectation of wit for real feeling.

* See the African Eclogues, Chat. Misc. p. 56—61.

† Chat. Misc. p. 85.

feeling. Probably, indeed, when he composed the African Eclogues, which was just before, he might not be without a distant contemplation of a similar design; and perhaps we are to attribute a part of the exulting expressions, which occur in the letters to his mother and sister, to the kind and laudable intention of making them happy with respect to his prospects in life; since we find him, almost at the very crisis of his distress, sending a number of little unnecessary presents to them and his grandmother, while perhaps he was himself almost in want of the necessities of life.

On the score of incapacity probably, Mr. Barrett refused him the necessary recommendation, and his last hope was blasted*. Of Mrs. Angel, with whom he

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last

* This circumstance reflects no disgrace, but rather honour upon Mr. B. as he could not possibly foresee the melancholy consequence, and he could not in conscience be the instrument

last resided, no enquiries have afforded any satisfactory intelligence; but there can be little doubt that his death was preceded by extreme indigence. Mr. Cross, an apothecary in Brook-street, informed Mr. Warton, that while Chatterton lived in the neighbourhood, he frequently called at the shop, and was repeatedly pressed by Mr. Cross to dine or sup with him in vain. One evening, however, human frailty so far prevailed over his dignity, as to tempt him to partake of the regale of a barrel of oysters, when he was observed to eat most voraciously †. Mrs. Wolfe, a barber's wife, within a few doors of the house where Mrs. Angel lived, has also afforded ample testimony, both to his poverty and his pride. She says, "that Mrs. Angel told her, after his death, that on the 24th of August, as she knew he had

instrument of committing the lives of a considerable number of persons to one totally inadequate to the charge.

† Warton's Inquiry, p. 107.

had not eaten any thing for two or three days, she begged he would take some dinner with her; but he was offended at her expressions, which seemed to hint he was in want, and assured her he was not hungry*." In these desperate circumstances, his mind reverted to what (we learn from Mr. Thistlethwaite, and other quarters) he had accustomed himself to regard as a last resource.—“ Over his death, for the sake of the world,” says the author of *Love and Madness*, “ I would willingly draw a veil. But this must not be. They who are in a condition to patronise merit, and they who feel a consciousness of merit which is not patronised, may form their own resolutions from the catastrophe of his tale;—those, to lose no opportunity of befriending genius; these, to seize every opportunity of befriending themselves, and, upon no account, to

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harbour

* *Love and Madness*, p. 219.

harbour the most distant idea of quitting the world, however it may be unworthy of them, lest despondency should at last deceive them into so unpardonable a step. Chatterton, as appears by the Coroner's Inquest, swallowed arsenick in water, on the 24th of August 1770, and died in consequence thereof the next day. He was buried in a shell, in the burying ground of Shoe-lane work-house*." Whatever unfinished pieces he might have, he cautiously destroyed them before his death; and his room, when broken open, was found covered with little scraps of paper†. What must increase our regret for this hasty and unhappy step, is the information that the late Dr. Fry, head of St. John's College in Oxford, went to Bristol in the latter end of August 1770, in order to search into the history of Rowley and Chatterton, and to patronise the latter,

* Love and Madness, p. 221.

† Ibid. p. 222.

latter, if he appeared to deserve assistance—when, alas ! all the intelligence he could procure was, that Chatterton had, within a few days, destroyed himself*.

I have been induced, from the circumstances of the narrative, repeatedly to consider the character of Chatterton in the different stages of life in which I had occasion to contemplate him. Indeed, the character of any man is better understood from a fair and accurate statement of his life and conduct, than from the comments of any critic or biographer whatever. A few general observations, which could not with so much propriety be introduced into the body of the narrative, I shall, however, venture to subjoin ; though I flatter myself the reader is not at this time unacquainted with the outline of his moral portrait.

The person of Chatterton, like his genius, was premature ; he had a man-

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liness

* Love and Madness, p. 226.

liness and dignity beyond his years, and there was a something about him uncommonly prepossessing. His most remarkable feature was his eyes, which, though gray, were uncommonly piercing; when he was warmed in argument, or otherwise, they sparked with fire, and one eye, it is said, was still more remarkable than the other*. His genius will be most completely estimated from his writings. He had an uncommon ardour in the pursuit of knowledge, and uncommon facility in the attainment of it. It was a favourite maxim with him, that "man is equal to any thing, and that every thing might be atchieved by diligence and abstinence †." His imagination,

* Love and Madness, p. 271.

† Ibid. p. 183. If any uncommon character was mentioned in his hearing, "All boy as he was, he would only observe, that the person in question merited praise; but that God had sent his creatures into the world with arms long enough to reach any thing, if they would be at the trouble of extending them." Ib,

tion, like Dryden's, was more fertile than correct; and he seems to have erred rather through haste and negligence, than through any deficiency of taste. He was above that puerile affectation which pretends to borrow nothing; he knew that original genius consists in forming new and happy combinations, rather than in searching after thoughts and ideas which never had occurred before; and that the man who never imitated, has seldom acquired a habit of good writing. If those poems, which pass under the name of Rowley, be really the productions of Chatterton, he possessed the strongest marks of a vigorous imagination and a sound judgment, in forming great, consistent, and ingenious plots, and making choice of the most interesting subjects. If Rowley and Chatterton be the same, it will be difficult to say whether he excelled most in the sublime or the satirical; and as a universal genius, he must rank

above Dryden, and perhaps only stand second to Shakespeare. If, on the other hand, we are to judge altogether from those pieces which are confessedly his own, we must undoubtedly assign the preference to those of the satirical class. In most of his serious writings, there is little that indicates their being composed with a full relish; when he is satirical, his soul glows in his composition.

Mr. Catcott affirms that Chatterton understood no language but his mother tongue; the same fact seems to be implied in his own confession, "that he spoke no tongue but his own*;" and it receives decisive confirmation from the testimony of Mr. Smith, in his conversation with Dr. Glynn; yet we find him, even so early as the year 1768, annexing a Latin signature to the "Accounte of the Fryers passing

* Love and Madness, p. 198.

passing the old Bridge," and there are some attempts at inscriptions in old French, in the design which he planned for his own tomb-stone *. He, probably, might have acquired some little knowledge of both these languages; but even if this were the case, there can be no doubt that it was very superficial. When we consider the variety of his engagements while at Bristol, his extensive reading, and the great knowledge he had acquired of the ancient language of his native country, we cannot wonder that he had not time to occupy himself in the study of other languages; and after his arrival in London, he had a new and necessary science to learn, the world; and that he made the most advantageous use of his time is evident from the extensive knowledge of mankind displayed in the different essays, which he produced occasionally for periodical publications.

* Chatterton's Will, in App. to Misc.

cations. The lively and vigorous imagination of Chatterton contributed, doubtless, to animate him with that spirit of enterprise, which led him to form so many impracticable and visionary schemes, for the acquisition of fame and fortune. His ambition was evident from his earliest youth; and perhaps the inequality of his spirits might, in a great measure, depend upon the fairness of his views, or the dissipation of his projects. His melancholy was extreme on some occasions, and, at those times, he constantly argued in favour of suicide. Mr. Catcott left him one evening totally depressed; but he returned the next morning with unusual spirits. He said, "he had sprung a mine," and produced a parchment, containing the *Sprytes*, a poem, now in the possession of Mr. Barrett*.

His

* From the information of Mr. Seward.

His natural melancholy was not corrected by the irreligious principles, which he had so unfortunately imbibed. To these we are certainly to attribute his premature death; and, if he can be proved guilty of the licentiousness which is by some laid to his charge, it is reasonable to believe that a system, which exonerates the mind from the apprehension of future punishment, would not contribute much to restrain the criminal excesses of the passions. Had Chatterton lived, and been fortunate enough to fall into settled and sober habits of life, his excellent understanding would, in all probability, have led him to see the fallacy of those principles, which he had hastily embraced; as it was, the only preservatives of which he was possessed against the contagion of vice, were the enthusiasm of literature, and that delicacy of sentiment which taste and reading inspire. But though these auxiliaries are not wholly to
be

despised, we have too many instances of their inefficacy in supporting the cause of virtue, to place any confident reliance on them.

Under such circumstances there is little cause for surprize, if the passions of Chatterton should frequently have trespassed the boundaries of reason and moral duty. That he had strong resentments is evident from his great disposition to satire, and particularly from the letter which has been mentioned as written by him to his school-master, soon after the commencement of his apprenticeship. That he was "proud and imperious," is allowed by his sister, and the generality of his acquaintance. He stands charged with a profligate attachment to women; the accusation, however, is stated in a vague and desultory manner, as if from common report, without any direct or decided evidence in support of the opinion. To the regularity

rity of his conduct during his residence in Bristol, some respectable testimonies have been already exhibited. It is, indeed, by no means improbable, that a young man of strong passions, and unprotected by religious principles, might frequently be unprepared to resist the temptations of a licentious metropolis; yet, even after his arrival in London, there are some proofs in his favour, which ought not to be disregarded. During a residence of nine weeks at Mr. Walmsley's, he never staid out beyond the family hours, except one night, when Mrs. Ballance knew that he lodged at the house of a relation*.

Whatever may be the truth of these reports, the list of his virtues still appears to exceed the catalogue of his faults. His temperance was in some respects exemplary. He seldom eat animal food, and never tasted any strong or spirituous liquors :

* Love and Madness, p. 261.

quors: he lived chiefly on a morsel of bread or a tart, with a draught of water. His sister affirms, that he was a lover of truth from the earliest dawn of reason; and that his school-master depended on his veracity on all occasions *: the pride of genius will seldom descend to the most contemptible of vices, falsehood. His high sense of dignity has been already noticed in two most striking instances; but the most amiable feature in his character, was his generosity and attachment to his mother and relations. Every favourite project for his advancement in life was accompanied with promises and encouragement to them; while in London, he continued to send them presents, at a time when he was known himself to be in want: and indeed, the unremitting attention, kindness and respect, which appear in the whole of his conduct towards them, are deserving the imitation of those
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* Mrs. N's letter, *ibid.*

in more fortunate circumstances, and under the influence of better principles of faith than Chatterton possessed*.

He had a number of friends, and notwithstanding his disposition to satire, he is scarcely known to have had any enemies. By the accounts of all who were acquainted with him, there was something uncommonly insinuating in his manner and conversation. Mr. Cross informed Mr. Warton, that in Chatterton's frequent visits while he resided at Brook-street, he found his conversation, a little infidelity excepted, most captivating†. His extensive, though in many instances, superficial knowledge, united with his genius, wit and fluency, must have admirably accomplished him for the pleasures of society. His pride, which perhaps

* It can never be sufficiently lamented, that this amiable propensity was not more uniform in Chatterton. A real love for his relations ought to have arrested the hand of suicide; but when religion is lost, all uniformity of principle is lost. O.

† Warton's Inquiry, 107.

haps should rather be termed the strong consciousness of intellectual excellence, did not destroy his affability. He was always accessible, and rather forward to make acquaintance, than apt to decline the advances of others*. There is reason however to believe, that the inequality of his spirits, affected greatly his behaviour in company. His fits of absence were frequent and long. "He would often look stedfastly in a person's face without speaking, or seeming to see the person, for a quarter of an hour or more†."

Chatterton had one ruling passion which governed his whole conduct, and that was the desire of literary fame; this passion intruded itself on every occasion, and absorbed his whole attention. Whether he would
have

* "Last week being in the pit of Drury Lane theatre, I contracted an immediate acquaintance (which you know is no hard task, to me) with a young gentleman, &c. Letter to his mother, *Love and Madness*, p. 197.

† *Love and Madness*, p. 214.

have continued to improve or the contrary, must have depended in some measure on the circumstances of his future life. Had he fallen into profligate habits and connections, he would probably have lost a great part of his ardour for the cultivation of his mind; and his maturer age would only have diminished the admiration which the efforts of his childhood have so justly excited.

At the shrine of Chatterton, some grateful incense has been offered. Mr. Warton speaks of him as "a prodigy of genius," as, "a singular instance of a prematurity of abilities." He adds, that "he possessed a comprehension of mind, and an activity of understanding, which predominated over his situation in life, and his opportunities of instruction*." And Mr. Malone "believes him to have been the greatest genius that England has produced

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duced

* History of English poetry.

duced since the days of Shakespear*.” Mr. Croft†, the ingenious author of *Love and Madness*, to whom in the course of this work I have had many obligations, is still more unqualified in his praises. He asserts, that “no such human being, at any period of life, has ever been known, or possibly ever will be known.” He adds, in another place, “an army of Macedonian and Swedish mad butchers, indeed, fly before him; nor does my memory supply me with any human being, who, at such an age, with such disadvantages, has produced such compositions ‡.

Under

* *Curfory Observations on the Poems attributed to Rowley*, p. 41.

† Editor of an intended new English Dictionary.

‡ *Mohammed*, it is true, with hardly the usual education of his illiterate tribe, unable (as was imagined, and he pretended) even to read or write, *forgerd* the KORAN; which is to this day the most elegant composition in the Arabic language, and its standard of excellence. Upon the argument of improbability, that a man so illiterate should compose a book so admired, *Mohammed* artfully rested the principal

Under the Heathen mythology, superstition and admiration would have explained all by bringing Apollo upon earth: nor would the god ever have descended with more credit to himself."

The following parallel also by the same ingenious critic, does equal credit to the ingenuity of its author, and the reputation of Chatterton.

Milton enjoyed every advantage not only of private, but of public, domestic, but of foreign education.	Chatterton wanted every advantage of every possible education.
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Milton

Chatterton

cial evidence of his *Koran's* divinity. (Sale's *Koran*, P. Discourse, p. 42, 60.) He, who, merely from improbability, denies Chatterton to be the author of Rowley's Poems, must go near to admit God to be the author of the *Koran*. But, before we compare together Chatterton and Mohammed, it should be remembered that Mohammed was *forty* when he commenced prophet. Perhaps the most extraordinary circumstance about Mohammed is, that even familiarity could not sink him into contempt; that he contrived to be a hero and a prophet, even to his wives and his *valets de chambre*. Even his fits of the epilepsy he converted into proofs of his divine mission. It is probable, that, if *Mohammed* had been less salacious, and not subject

Milton in his youth received such instructions from teachers and schoolmasters, that, in his age, he was able to become a schoolmaster, and a teacher to others.

Milton's juvenile writings would not have justified a prophecy of *Paradise Lost*: but the author of them flatters himself, by dating his life 15 till he had turned 16.

Milton did not produce *Comus* much earlier than in his 26th year; since it was first presented at Ludlow in 1634, and he was born in 1608. In 1645, when he was 37, *Allegro and Penseroso*, first appeared. In 1655, when he was 47, after *long choosing, and beginning late*, he set himself to turn a strange thing, called a *Myftery*, into an epic poem; which was not completed in less than Chatterton's whole active existence, since the copy was not sold till April,

1667,

Chatterton became his own teacher and his own schoolmaster before other children are subjects for instruction; and never knew any other.

Few, if any, of Milton's juvenile writings would have been owned by Chatterton, at least by Rowley, could he have past for the author of them.

Chatterton, not suffered to be *long choosing*, or to *begin late*, in 17 years and 9 months, reckoning from his cradle to his grave, produced the volume of Rowley's poems, his volume of *Miscellanies*, and many things which are not printed, beside what his indignation tore in pieces the day he spurned at the world, and threw himself on the anger of his Creator.

to the falling sickness, out of thirty equal divisions of the known world, whereof Christianity claims five, and Paganism nineteen, the inhabitants of six would not now believe in the *Koran*.

1667, and then consisted only of 10 books. With all its glorious perfections, Paradise Lost contains puerilities, to which Chatterton was a stranger. In 3 years more, when he was 62, appeared Milton's History of England, Paradise Regained, and Sampson, were published in the same year. Lycidas I had forgotten. It was written in his 29th year. That propriety of character and situation, which Chatterton can seldom have violated, or he would not to this moment deceive such* and so many men, Milton seldom preserves in Lycidas. If, in the course of an existence almost four times longer than Chatterton's, this man (*fallen on evil days and evil tongues*; with less truth than Chatterton), who bore no fruit worth gathering till after the age at which Chatterton was withered by the hand of Death—if, I say, this great man produced other writings, he will not quarrel that posterity has forgotten them; if he should, posterity will still perhaps forget them.

Milton's

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What

Milton's manuscripts, preserved at Cambridge, bear testimony to his frequent and commendable correction.

Milton, as Ellwood relates, could never bear to hear *Paradise Lost* preferred before *Paradise Regained*. He is known to have pronounced Dryden to be no poet.

Milton, more from inclination than want of bread, it seems, entered into party disputes, whether a king might be lawfully beheaded, &c. with a servility and a virulence, and let out his praise to hire, perhaps, with a meanness, at all periods of his life, which the worst enemies of Chatterton cannot prove him to have equalled.

Milton, in affluence (if compared with others beside Chatterton)

What time could Chatterton have found for alteration or correction, when I maintain that any boy who should only have fairly *transcribed*, before his 18th year, all that Chatterton, before his 18th year, invented and composed, would be thought to deserve the reputation of diligence, and the praise of application?

If Chatterton, much earlier in life than Milton was calculated either to be an author or a critick, had not possessed a chaffer judgment, he would not still impose on so many criticks and authors.

Chatterton, in order to procure bread for himself, a grandmother, mother and sister, was ready to prove the patriotism of Bute, or of Beckford, in writings, which older men need not blush to own, and in an age when older men did not blush at such a *profession*.

Chatterton, steeped to the lips in poverty, entertained,
long

Chatterton) felt on his brows those laurels which others could not see; and was persuaded that, "by labour and intense study, his portion in this life, he might leave something so written to after-times, as they should not willingly let it die."

Paradise Lost produced the author and the widow only 28 pounds. The meaner, more servile, and more versatile abilities of the author produced him indeed enough to be deprived of four thousand pounds by ill-fortune, and to leave fifteen hundred pounds to his family.

Phillips relates of Milton, from his own mouth, that "his vein never happily flowed but from the autumnal equinox to the vernal." Richardson writes, that "his poetical faculty would on a sudden rush upon him with an impetus or æstrum."

Milton, when a man, seldom drank any thing strong: he ate with delicacy and temperance.

Milton's

long before he had lived 18 years, ideas, hopes, persuasions, (*by labour and intense study, more truly his portion in this life* than Milton's) of living to all eternity in the memory of Fame.

Mr. Catcott and Mr. Barrett must inform the world whether Rowley's poems and his own together produced Chatterton 28 shillings.

What is said of Chatterton, and of the moon's effect upon him, you have read.

Chatterton, when a boy, hardly ever touched meat, and drank only water: when a child, he would often re-

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fuse

use to take any thing but bread and water, even if it did happen that his mother had a hot meal, "because
 " he had a work in hand,
 " and he must not make
 " himself more stupid than
 " God had made him."

Milton's historians and grand-daughter admit his moroseness to his children, and that he would not let them learn to write.

Chatterton's mother, his sister and his letters, can speak best of his heart, and of his wishes that his sister might learn every thing.

To these I shall add the testimony of Mr. Knox:

" Unfortunate boy ! short and evil were thy days, but thy fame shall be immortal. Hadst thou been known to the munificent patrons of genius—

" Unfortunate boy ! poorly wast thou accommodated during thy short sojourning among us ;—rudely wast thou treated,—forely did thy feeling soul suffer from the scorn of the unworthy ; and there are, at last,

last, those who wish to rob thee of thy only meed, thy posthumous glory. Severe too are the censurers of thy morals. In the gloomy moments of despondency, I fear thou hast uttered impious and blasphemous thoughts, which none can defend, and which neither thy youth, nor thy fiery spirit, nor thy situation, can excuse. But let thy more rigid censors reflect, that thou wast literally and strictly but a boy. Let many of thy bitterest enemies reflect what were their own religious principles, and whether they had any, at the age of fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen. Surely it is a severe and an unjust surmise, that thou wouldest probably have ended thy life as a victim of the laws, if thou hadst not finished it as thou didst; since the very act by which thou durst put an end to thy painful existence, proves that thou thoughtest it better to die,

die, than to support life by theft or violence.

“ The speculative errors of a boy who wrote from the sudden suggestions of passion or despondency, who is not convicted of any immoral or dishonest act in consequence of his speculations, ought to be consigned to oblivion. But there seems to be a general and inveterate dislike to the boy, exclusively of the poet; a dislike which many will be ready to impute, and, indeed, not without the appearance of reason, to that insolence and envy of the little great, which cannot bear to acknowledge so transcendent and commanding a superiority in the humble child of want and obscurity.

“ Malice, if there was any, may surely now be at rest; for “ Cold he lies in the grave below.” But where were ye, O ye friends to genius, when, stung with disappointment,

appointment, distressed for food and raiment, with every frightful form of human misery painted on his fine imagination, poor Chatterton sunk in despair? Alas! ye knew him not then, and now it is to late,—

For now he is dead;
Gone to his death bed,
All under the willow tree.

So sang the sweet youth, in as tender an elegy as ever flowed from a feeling heart.

“ In return for the pleasure I have received from thy poems, I pay thee, poor boy, the trifling tribute of my praise. Thyself thou hast emblazoned; thine own monument thou hast erected: But they whom thou hast delighted, feel a pleasure in vindicating thine honours from the rude attacks of detraction *”.

The

* Knox's Essays, No. 144.

The poetic eulogiums have, however, exceeded, both in number and excellence, the compliments of critical writers; a few remarkably interesting and beautiful, I shall select, with the double view of adorning the work, and gratifying the reader.

A poet, whose superior elegance and classical taste do not appear to have met with all the applause they have deserved, thus speaks of Chatterton :

“ Yet as with streaming eye the forrowing muse,
“ Pale CHATTERTON’S untimely urn bedews ;
“ Her accents shall arraign the partial care,
“ That shielded not her son from cold despair * .

There is a beautiful monody written by Mrs. Cowley, inserted in the last edition of *Love and Madness*.—It is as follows :

O CHATTERTON ! for thee the pensive song I raise,
Thou object of my wonder, pity, envy, praise !
Bright Star of Genius !—torn from life and fame,
My tears, my verse, shall consecrate thy name !

Ye

* Pye’s *Progress of Refinement*, Part 2.

Ye Muses! who around his natal bed
Triumphant sung, and all your influence shed;
APOLLO! thou who rapt his infant breast,
And in his dædal numbers shone confest,
Ah! why, in vain, such mighty gifts bestow?
—Why give fresh tortures to the Child of Woe?
Why thus, with barb'rous care, illumine his mind,
Adding new sense to all the ills behind?

Thou haggard Poverty! whose cheerless eye
Transforms young Rapture to the pond'rous sigh,
In whose drear cave no Muse e'er struck the lyre,
Nor Bard e'er madden'd with poetic fire;
Why all thy spells for CHATTERTON combine?
His thought creative, why must thou confine?
Subdu'd by thee, his pen no more obeys,
No longer gives the song of ancient days;
Nor paints in glowing tints from distant skies,
Nor bids wild scen'ry rush upon our eyes——
Check'd in her flight, his rapid Genius cowers,
Drops her sad plumes, and yields to thee her powers.

Behold him, Muses! see your fav'rite son
The prey of want, ere manhood is begun!
The bosom ye have fill'd, with anguish torn——
The mind you cherish'd, drooping and forlorn!

And now Despair her fable form extends,
Creeps to his couch, and o'er his pillow bends.
Ah, see! a deadly bowl the fiend conceal'd,
Which to his eye with caution is reveal'd——
Seize it, Apollo!—seize the liquid snare!
Dash it to earth, or dissipate in air!
Stay, hapless Youth! refrain—abhor the draught,
With pangs, with racks, with deep repentance fraught!

Oh,

Oh, hold ! the cup with woe ETERNAL flows,
 More—more than Death the pois'nous juice bestows !
 In vain !—he drinks—and now the searching fires
 Rush through his veins, and writhing he expires !
 No sorrowing friend, no sister, parent, nigh,
 To sooth his pangs, or catch his parting sigh ;
 Alone, unknown, the Muse's darling dies,
 And with the vulgar dead unnoted lies !
 Bright Star of Genius !—torn from life and fame,
 My tears, my verse, shall consecrate thy name !

Nor has the Muse of Amwell been
 backward in commendation.

And BRISTOL ! why thy scenes explore,
 And why those scenes so soon resign,
 And fail to seek the spot that bore
 That wonderous tuneful Youth of thine,
 The Bard, whose boasted ancient store
 Rose recent from his own exhaustless mine † !

Though Fortune all her gifts denied,
 Though Learning made him not her choice,
 The Muse still placed him at her side,
 And bade him in her smile rejoice—
 Description still his pen supplied,
 Pathos his thought, and Melody his voice !

Conscious and proud of merit high,
 Fame's wreath he boldly claim'd to wear ;

But

† This is at least the Author's opinion, notwithstanding all that has hitherto appeared on the other side of the question. The last line alludes to one of the ingenious Mr. Mason in his Elegy to a young Nobleman :

“ See from the depths of his exhaustless mine

“ His glittering stores the tuneful spendthrift throws.”

But Fame, regardless, pass'd him by,
Unknown, or deem'd unworth her care :
The Sun of Hope forsook his sky ;
And all his land look'd dreary, bleak, and bare !

Then Poverty, grim spectre, rose,
And horror o'er the prospect threw—
His deep distress too nice to expose ;
Too nice for common aid to sue,
A dire alternative he chose,
And rashly from the painful scene withdrew.

Ah! why for Genius' headstrong rage
Did Virtue's hand no curb prepare ?
What boots, poor youth! that now thy page
Can boast the public praise to share,
The learn'd in deep research engage,
And lightly entertain the gentle fair ?

Ye, who superfluous wealth command,
O why your kind relief delay'd ?
O why not snatch'd his desperate hand ?
His foot on Fate's dread brink not stay'd ?
What thanks had you your native land
For a new SHAKESPEARE or new MILTON paid !

For me—Imagination's power
Leads oft insensibly my way,
To where, at midnight's silent hour,
The crescent moon's slow-westering ray
Pours full on REDCLIFF's lofty tower,
And gilds with yellow light its walls of grey.

'Midst Toil and Commerce slumbering round,
Lull'd by the rising tide's hoarse roar,
There Frome and Avon willow-crown'd,
I view sad-wandering by the shore,

With

With streaming tears, and notes of mournful sound,
Too late their hapless Bard, untimely lost, deplore.

The following lines are uncommonly
animated and poetical :

If changing times suggest the pleasing hope,
That Bards no more with adverse fortune cope ;
That in this alter'd clime, where Arts increase,
And make our polish'd Isle a second Greece ;
That now, if Poesy proclaims her Son,
And challenges the wreath by Fancy won ;
Both Fame and Wealth adopt him as their heir,
And liberal Grandeur makes his life her care ;
From such vain thoughts thy erring mind defend,
And look on CHATTERTON's disastrous end.
Oh, ill-starr'd Youth, whom Nature form'd in vain,
With powers on Pindus' splendid height to reign !
O dread example of what pangs await
Young Genius struggling with malignant fate !
What could the Muse, who fir'd thy infant frame
With the rich promise of Poetic fame ;
Who taught thy hand its magic art to hide,
And mock the insolence of Critic pride ;
What cou'd her unavailing cares oppose,
To save her darling from his desperate foes ;
From pressing Want's calamitous controul,
And Pride, the fever of the ardent soul ?
Ah, see, too conscious of her failing power,
She quits her Nurrling in his deathful hour !
In a chill room, within whose wretched wall
No cheering voice replies to Misery's call ;
Near a vile bed, too crazy to sustain
Misfortune's wasted limbs, convuls'd with pain,

On

On the bare floor, with heaven-directed eyes,
 The hapless Youth in speechless horror lies!
 The pois'nous phial, by distraction drain'd,
 Rolls from his hand, in wild contortion strain'd:
 Pale with life-wasting pangs, it's dire effect,
 And stung to madness by the world's neglect,
 He, in abhorrence of the dangerous Art,
 Once the dear idol of his glowing heart,
 Tears from his Harp the vain detested wires,
 And in the frenzy of Despair expires*!

Again, with all the honest resentment of
 indignant Genius,

Search the dark scenes where drooping Genius lies,
 And keep from sorriest sights a nation's eyes,
 That, from expiring Want's reproaches free,
 Our generous country ne'er may weep to see
 A future CHATTERTON by poison dead,
 An OTWAY fainting for a little bread†.

To these elegant offerings to the genius
 of Chatterton, it is with peculiar pleasure
 I add a sonnet to expression, from the
 polished and pathetic pen of Miss Helen
 Maria Williams.

Expression, child of soul! I fondly trace
 Thy strong enchantments, when the poet's lyre,
 The painter's pencil catch thy sacred fire,
 And beauty wakes for thee her touching grace—
 But from this frightened glance thy form avert
 When horrors check thy tear, thy struggling sigh,
 When frenzy rolls in thy impassion'd eye,
 Or guilt sits heavy on thy lab'ring heart—

K

Nor

* Hayley's Essay on Epic Poetry, Ep. iv. l. 211 to 248.

† Ibid, 336 to 342.

Nor ever let my shudd'ring fancy bear
The wafting groan, or view the pallid look
Of him * the Muses lov'd—when hope forlook
His spirit, vainly to the Muses dear!
For charm'd with heav'nly song, this bleeding breast,
Mourns the blest power of verse could give despair no
rest.—

Independent of the poems attributed to Rowley, Chatterton has left behind him a variety of pieces, published and unpublished; the most considerable of the former are to be found in a volume of miscellanies, published in 1778, to which is prefixed a sketch for the late Alderman Beckford's statue, a specimen of Chatterton's abilities in the arts of drawing and design; and this publication was followed in 1786, by "a suppliment to the miscellanies of Thomas Chatterton." The compositions contained in both these volumes are scarcely to be inspected with all the severity of criticism. Considerable allowances ought to be made for the exercises
of

* Chatterton.

of his infantine years, for the incorrect effusions of momentary resentment, for a few lines thrown together in a playful mood to please an illiterate female, or to amuse a school-fellow, and perhaps not less for the hasty and involuntary productions of indigence and necessity, constructed for a magazine, and calculated for the sole purpose of procuring a subsistence. Of the poetical part of these miscellanies, I have already intimated, that the serious are inferior to the satirical.

In the elegy to the memory of Mr. Thomas Phillips, of Fairford, we, however, meet with some descriptive stanzas, perhaps not unworthy the author of Rowley's poems:

" Pale rugged Winter bending o'er his head,
" His grizzled hair bedropt with icy dew;
" His eyes, a dusky light, congealed and dead;
" His robe, a tinge of bright ethereal blue.
" His train a motley'd, sanguine fable cloud,
" He limps along the russet dreary moor;
" Whilst rising whirlwinds, blasting, keen and loud,
" Roll the white surges to the sounding shore."

“ Fancy, whose various, figure-tinctured vest
“ Was ever changing to a different hue ;
“ Her head, with varied bays and flow’rets dress’d,
“ Her eyes two spangles of the morning dew.”

“ Now as the mantle of the evening swells,
“ Upon my mind I feel a thick’ning gloom !
“ Ah ! could I charm, by friendship’s potent spells,
“ The soul of Philip’s from the deathly tomb !
“ Then would we wander thro’ the dark’ned vale,
“ In converse such as heavenly spirits use,
“ And borne upon the plumage of the gale,
“ Hymn the creator and exhort the Muse*.”

In a letter to his friend Cary, dated London, July 1, 1770, Chatterton tells him, “ in the last London magazine, and in that which comes out to day, are the only two pieces of mine I have the vanity to call poetry.” These were the two African Eclogues, published in his *Miscellanies*. I am sorry I cannot unite with the author in the commendation of these pieces ; but Chatterton, as well as Milton, seems to have been incapable of estimating rightly the respective merits of his
own

* Chatterton’s *Miscellanies*.

own productions *. They are unconnected and unequal, though it must be confessed, that they contain some excellent lines; the following occur almost at the beginning of the first eclogue, and are animated, expressive and harmonious :

“ High from the ground the youthful warriors sprung,
 “ Loud on the concave shell the lances rung :
 “ In all the mystic mazes of the dance,
 “ The youths of Banny’s burning sands advance,
 “ Whilst the soft virgin, panting, looks behind,
 “ And rides upon the pinions of the wind †.”

Of the correctness of the following simile in the second eclogue, I shall not determine; but the liveliness of the description evinces a most vigorous imagination.

“ On Tiber’s banks, close rank’d, a warring train,
 “ Stretch’d to the distant edge of Galca’s plain :
 “ So when arrived at Gaigra’s highest steep,
 “ We view the wide expansion of the deep ;
 “ See in the gilding of her wat’ry robe,
 “ The quick declension of the circling globe ;

K 3

“ From

* I know some respectable friends, who esteem this instance of bad taste, as a strong presumptive argument against Chatterton being the author of Rowley’s poems.

† Chatterton’s Miscellanies, p. 56.

" From the blue sea a chain of mountains rise,
 " Blended at once with water and with skies :
 " Beyond our sight in vast extension curl'd,
 " The check of waves, the guardian of the world *."

The satire of Chatterton has more of the luxuriance, fluency, and negligence of Dryden, than of the terseness and refinement of Pope. The following lines are in the style of the former :

" Search nature o'er, procure me, if you can,
 " The fancied character, an honest man.
 " A man of sense not honest by constraint,
 " (For fools are canvass, living but in paint)
 " To Mammon, or to superstition slaves,
 " All orders of mankind are fools or knaves :
 " In the first attribute by none surpass'd,
 " * * * * endeavours to obtain the last †."

The following is an evident imitation of Mr. Pope, even to the cadence of the verse, but it is not equally successful with the last specimen :

" But why must Chatterton selected sit,
 " The butt of every Critic's little wit ?
 " Am I alone for ever in a crime,
 " *Nonsense in prose, or blasphemy in rhyme ?*

" All

* Chatterton's Miscellanies, p. 56.

† Epistle to the Rev. Mr. Catcott, Append. to Chat. Mis. p. 23.

- " All monosyllables a line appears !—
 " Is it not very often so in Shears ?
 " See gen'rous Eccas, length'ning out my praise,
 " Inraptured with the music of my lays;
 " In all the arts of panegyric grac'd,
 " The cream of modern literary taste*."

In a poem on Happiness, inserted in Love and Madness, are some strokes of satire in a superior style :

- " Come to my pen, companion of the lay,
 " And speak of worth, where merit ———
 " Let lazy B ——— undistinguish'd snore,
 " Nor lash his generosity to ———,
 " Praise him for sermons of his curate bought,
 " His easy flow of words, his depth of thought ;
 " His active spirit ever in display,
 " His great devotion when he drawls to pray,
 " His fainted soul distinguishably seen,
 " With all the virtues of a modern Dean†."

- " Pulvis, whose knowledge centres in degrees,
 " Is never happy but when taking fees :
 " Blest with a bushy wig and solemn pace,
 " Catcott admires him for a *fossile* face."
 —" Mould'ring in dust the fair Lavinia lies,
 " Death and our Doctor clos'd her sparkling eyes,
 " O all ye pow'rs, the guardians of the world !
 " Where is the useless bolt of vengeance hurl'd ?

K 4

" Say

* The Defence, *ibid.* p. 37.

† Love and Madness, p. 155.

“ Say, shall this leaden sword of plague prevail,
 “ And kill the mighty where the mighty fail?
 “ Let the red bolus tremble o’er his head,
 “ And with his guardian julep strike him dead*!”

In the volume of his miscellanies are two political pieces, the *Consuliad*, written at Bristol, and in the highest strain of party scurrility†; and the *Prophecy*, written apparently a short time after, which is in the best style of Swift’s mi-

nor

* *Love and Madness*, 156.

† The introduction to this poem is not destitute of merit.
 Of warring senators, and battles dire,
 Of quails uneaten; Muse, awake the lyre.
 Where C—pb—ll’s chimneys overlook the square,
 And N—t—n’s future prospects hang in air;
 Where counsellors dispute, and cockers match,
 And Caledonian earls in concert scratch;
 A group of heroes, occupied the round,
 Long in the rolls of infamy renown’d.
 Circling the table all in silence sat,
 Now tearing bloody lean, now champing fat;
 Now picking ortolans, and chicken slain,
 To form the whimsies of an *à-la-reine*:
 Now storming castles of the newest taste,
 And granting articles to forts of paste:
 Now swallowing bitter draughts of Prussian beer;
 Now sucking tallow of salubrious deer.

nor pieces, and appears to be the genuine effusion of that enthusiastic love of liberty, which in tumultuous times generally takes possession of young and sanguine dispositions*.

Of

* THE PROPHECY.

This truth of old was sorrow's friend,
 "Times at the worst will surely mend."
 The difficulty's then to know,
 How long oppression's clock can go;
 When Britain's sons may cease to sigh,
 And hope that their redemption's nigh.

When Vice exalted takes the lead,
 And Vengeance hangs but by a thread;
 Gay peereffes turn'd out o'doors;
 Whoremasters peers, and sons of whores;
 Look up, ye Britons! cease to sigh,
 For your redemption draweth nigh.

When vile Corruption's brazen face,
 At council-board shall take her place;
 And lords-commissioners resort,
 To welcome her at Britain's court;
 Look up, ye Britons! cease to sigh,
 For your redemption draweth nigh.

See Pension's harbour large and clear,
 Defended by St. Stephen's pier!
 The entrance safe, by Current led,
 Tiding round G—'s jetty head;
 Look up, ye Britons! cease to sigh,
 For your redemption draweth nigh.

When

Of the prose compositions of Chatterton,
his imitations of Ossian are certainly the
worst: he has not indeed improved upon

an

When Civil-Power shall snore at ease,
While soldiers fire—to keep the peace;
When murders sanctuary find,
And petticoats can Justice blind;
Look up, ye Britons! cease to sigh,
For your redemption draweth nigh.

Commerce o'er Bondage will prevail,
Free as the wind, that fills her sail.
When she complains of vile restraint,
And Power is deaf to her complaint;
Look up, ye Britons! cease to sigh,
For your redemption draweth nigh.

When raw projectors shall begin
Oppression's hedge, to keep her in;
She in disdain will take her flight,
And bid the Gotham fools good night;
Look up, ye Britons! cease to sigh,
For your redemption draweth nigh.

When tax is laid, to save debate,
By prudent ministers of state;
And, what the people did not give,
Is levied by prerogative;
Look up, ye Britons! cease to sigh,
For your redemption draweth nigh.

When Popish bishops dare to claim
Authority, in George's name;

By

an indifferent model. They are full of
wild imagery and inconsistent metaphor,
with

By Treason's hand set up, in spite
Of George's title, William's right;
Look up, ye Britons! cease to sigh,
For your redemption draweth nigh.

When Popish priest a pension draws
From starv'd exchequer, for the cause
Commission'd, proselytes to make
In British realms, for Britain's sake;
Look up, ye Britons! cease to sigh,
For your redemption draweth nigh.

When snug in power, sly recusants
Make laws for British Protestants;
And d——g William's Revolution,
As Justices claim execution;
Look up, ye Britons! cease to sigh,
For your redemption draweth nigh.

When soldiers, paid for our defence,
In wanton pride slay innocence;
Blood from the ground for vengeance reeks,
Till Heaven the inquisition makes;
Look up, ye Britons! cease to sigh,
For your redemption draweth nigh.

When at Bute's feet poor Freedom lies,
Mark'd by the priest for sacrifice,
And doom'd a victim, for the sins
Of half the *outs*, and all the *ins*;
Look up, ye Britons! cease to sigh,
For your redemption draweth nigh.

When

with little either of plot or of character to recommend them.

His lighter Effays, such as the adventures of a star, the memoirs of a sad dog,

the

When Stewards pass a *boot* account,
And credit for the gross amount;
Then to replace exhausted store,
Mortgage the land to borrow more;
Look up, ye Britons! cease to sigh,
For your redemption draweth nigh.

When scrutineers, for private ends,
Against the vote declare their friends;
Or judge, as you stand there alive,
That five is more than forty-five;
Look up, ye Britons! cease to sigh,
For your redemption draweth nigh.

When George shall condescend to hear
The modest suit, the humble prayer;
A prince, to purpled pride unknown!
No favourites disgrace the throne!
Look up, ye Britons! sigh no more,
For your redemption's at the door.

When time shall bring your wish about,
Or, seven-years lease, *you sold*, is out;
No future contract to fulfil;
Your tenants holding at your will;
Raise up your heads! your right demand!
For your redemption's in your hand.

Then

the hunter of oddities, &c. display considerable knowledge of what is called the town, and demonstrate the keenness of his observation, and his quickness in acquiring any branch of knowledge, or in adapting himself to any situation. We are to remember, however, that he had been long conversant in this species of composition, and that a considerable fund of reading in magazines, reviews, &c. which Mr. War-ton observes “form the *school of the people*,” had prepared him well to exercise the profession of a periodical writer. Antiquities, however, constituted his favorite study, and in them his genius always appears to the greatest advantage; even the most humorous of his pieces (Tony Sel-wood’s

Then is your time to strike the blow,
And let the *slaves* of Mammon know,
Britain’s true sons A BRIBE can scorn,
And die as *free* as they were born.
VIRTUE again shall take her seat,
And your redemption stand compleat.

wood's letter *) derives its principal excellence from his knowledge of ancient customs.

In the volume of *Miscellanies* attributed to him, there are some pieces to which his title is not well ascertained. Some with the signature of *Afaphides*, are claimed by one Lockstone, a linen-draper, and a particular acquaintance of Chatterton; and the story of *Maria Friendless*, which Chatterton himself sent to the *Town and Country Magazine*, probably for the sake of obtaining an immediate and necessary supply of money, is almost a literal transcript of the letter of *Misella* in the *Rambler*.

If the reputation of Chatterton, however, rested solely on those works, which he acknowledged as his own, it would neither be so extensive as it is, nor probably

* Chatterton's *Miscellanies*, p. 209.

bably so permanent as it is likely to continue. Rowley's poems have deservedly immortalized the name of Chatterton, and the controversy which their publication excited, is the most curious and extraordinary controversy, which, since the days of Bentley has divided the literary world.

I have already noticed the manner in which these poems are said to have been discovered. The account which Chatterton himself gave of the supposed author is nearly as follows :

THOMAS ROWLEY was born at Norton Mal-seward in Somersetshire, and educated at the convent of St. Kenna, at Keynesham* . . He was of the clerical profession, was confessor to the two Canynge's, Robert and William, about the latter end of the reign of Henry the VIth,

OR

* Note prefixed to "Ballade of Charitie." Rowley's poems, p. 203.

or about the beginning of that of Edward IV. ; and was at least connected with our lady's church in Bristol *; though he is elsewhere styled the " parish priest of St. John's, in the city of Bristol †." After the death of Mr. Robert Canynge, (who at his brother's desire, bequeathed Rowley 100 marks) he was employed by that brother, Mr. William, to travel through a considerable part of England to collect drawings. Mr. Canynge was so well satisfied with his success, that he rewarded him with a purse of two hundred pounds, and promised him that he should never be in want. He continued afterwards the confidential friend of Canynge. He wrote a variety of poems, many of them addressed to that extraordinary character. He first lived in a house on the hill, and afterwards

* Memoirs of Sir W. Canynge, Chatterton's Miscellanies, p. 122.

† Introduction to the Battle of Hastings, Rowley's poems, p. 21.

afterwards in one by the Tower*; he survived his patron, and died at Westbury, in Gloucestershire†. Such is Chatterton's account; but it is only fair to mention, that the existence of any such person as Rowley, is totally denied by the disputants on one side of the controversy.

There can, however, be no doubt concerning the existence of W. Canynge, the patron of Rowley, since it is attested by such a number of contemporary historians, and his remains lie interred in the church of which he was the founder. He is called by Chatterton, Sir William Canynge. He was the younger son of a citizen of Bristol, and in his youth afforded early prognostics of wisdom and ability. He was of a handsome person, and married for love, without a fortune. Soon after his marriage, his father and

L his

* Chatterton's Miscellanies, p. 127 & 128.

† Rowley's Poems, p. 203.

his eldest brother (who both loved money as much as he despised it) died, and left him large estates in land and money, and his brother John dependent upon him, whom he placed in such an advantageous line of business, that he afterwards became Lord-Mayor of London.

This dawn of prosperity was, however, soon clouded by the death of his wife; to whose memory he afforded the most affectionate testimony, in rejecting the most splendid proposals for a second marriage. Of his native city he was Mayor five times; and in the year 1461, when Sir Baldwin Fulford was executed for treason, Canynge being then Mayor, pleaded for the criminal in vain. When he was knighted does not appear; but in the year 1467, a second marriage being proposed by the King, between him and one of the Widdeville, (the Queen's) family, Sir William went into holy orders purposely

purposely to avoid it; and was ordained Acolythe by his friend Carpenter, Bishop of Worcester, the 19th of September. He was afterwards dean of the Collegiate church of Westbury in Wilts; with his usual munificence he rebuilt that college, and died in the year 1474, with the universal character of learning and virtue. Among the proofs of his munificence there still exist an alms-house or hospital, with a chapel, and the beautiful church of St. Mary Redcliffe, in Bristol*. At a great expense he had collected a cabinet of curiosities†; his collection of manuscripts, among which were copies of his own and Rowley's poems, were deposited in a room in Redcliffe church: of the actual or pretended discovery of which I have already treated. Such is Chatterton's history of Canynge, in which, though

L 2

there

* Story of W. Canynge, Rowley's poems, Chatterton's Miscellanies, p. 112 to 122.

† Ibid.

there are some facts, which are amply confirmed, there are also several which are disputed by those who deny the authenticity of Rowley's poems.

These poems, we have already seen, were produced by Chatterton at different times, who asserted that he had copied them from the fragments of those ancient parchments, which his father had procured from the Redcliffe chest; he could never be prevailed upon to produce any originals, except a few fragments, the largest not more than eight inches long, and four and a half wide. The writing on these fragments was at least a tolerable imitation of ancient manuscript, and the parchment or vellum had every mark of age. The only poetical originals which he produced were, the challenge to Lydgate, the song to Ella, and Lydgate's answer, all contained in one parchment; the account of W. Canynge's feast; the epitaph

taph on Robert Canynge, and part of the story of W. Canynge; besides these there are some prose compositions, and a few drawings, still in the hands of Mr. Barrett*.

The poems attributed to Rowley were first collected in an octavo volume, and published by Mr. Tyrwhitt, the learned editor of Chaucer; a very splendid edition was afterwards published in quarto, by the late Dr. Milles, dean of Exeter, and president of the Society of Antiquaries, with a preliminary dissertation, and notes tending to prove that they were really written by Rowley and others in the 15th century.

The

* A complete list of the original parchments, which were given to Mr. Barret by Chatterton, and which he has now in his hands, was communicated by that gentleman to Dr. Milles, and is as follows:

The Song to Ella, with the challenge to Lydgate and the

L 3

Answer.

The poetical merit of these pieces is considerable. The subjects are interesting, and infinite imagination is displayed in the construction of the plots or fables, in the arrangement

Answer. This poem was sent by Mr. Barret to a friend, and is unfortunately lost.

Canynge's Feast, a Poem.

The first thirty-six lines of the Storie of William Canynge.

The following are Historical Prose Compositions.

1. The Yellow Roll, containing an account of the origin of coinage in England, and of the curiosities in Canynge's cabinet. This also was lent with the song to Ella, by Mr. Barret to a friend, and is lost.
2. The purple Roll, thirteen inches by ten, containing an account of particular Coins, and the second and third Sections of Turgotus's History of Bristol. N. B. The first Section above quoted is also extant in Chatterton's own hand, but the original does not appear.
3. Vita Burtoni, a parchment roll, about eight inches long, and four broad, very closely written; containing an account of Sir Simon de Burton, and his rebuilding Redcliff church.
4. Knights Templars Church; a History of its foundation, &c.
5. St. Mary's Church of the Port; a History of it from its foundation, ending with the verses on Robert Canynge.
6. Roll of Bartholomew's Priory, with a List of the Priors.

7. An

arrangement of the incidents, and the delineation of the characters. The beauties of poetry are scattered through them with no sparing hand. The Lyric productions in particular, such as the chorus's in the Tragedies, abound with luxuriant description, most vivid imagery, and striking metaphors. Through the veil of ancient language a happy adaptation of words

7. An account of the Chapel and House of Calendars; a drawing of the chapel, and underneath an explanation of it.
8. Ella's Chapple. No drawing, except to the Kist of Ella, but there is an account of its foundation.
9. St. Mary Magdalen's Chapel. A drawing only.
10. Grey Friars Church. A drawing only.
11. Drawing of three monumental Inscriptions.
12. Ancient Monument and Rudhall: mere delineations.
13. Lesser and Greater St. John's: only a rude delineation.
14. Several Drawings of the Castle of Bristol.
15. Strong Hold of the Castle: a drawing and account of its foundation, by Robert Earl of Gloucester, and Site thereof.
16. Old Wall of Bristol; mere drawings.
17. Carne of Robert Curthoses Mynde in Castle steed: a drawing or figure, with the words *Carne*, &c. underneath.

Milles's Rowley, page 438.

words is still apparent, and a style both energetic and expressive. Contrary to almost all the poetical productions of the times, when they are supposed to have been composed, they are in general conspicuous for the harmony and elegance of the verse. Indeed, some passages are inferior in none of the essentials of poetry, to the most finished productions of modern times.

On the other hand, it must not be dissembled that some (and many will think no inconsiderable) part of the charm of these poems may probably result from the Gothic sublimity of the style. Whatever is vulgar in language is lost by time, and a small degree of obscurity in an ancient author gives a latitude to the fancy of the reader, who generally imagines the style to be more forcible and expressive than perhaps it intrinsically is. We gaze with wonder on an antique fabric,

brick ; and when novelty of thought is not to be obtained, the novelty of language to which we are unaccustomed, is frequently accepted as a substitute. Most poets therefore, at least such as have aspired to the sublime, have thrown their dialect at least a century behind the common prose, and colloquial phraseology of their time ; nor can we entertain a doubt, but that even Shakespear and Milton have derived advantages from the antique structure of some of their most admired passages. The facility of composition is also greatly increased where full latitude is permitted in the use of an obsolete dialect ; since an author is indulged in the occasional use of both the old and the modern phraseology, and if the one does not supply him with the word for which he has immediate occasion, the other in all probability will not disappoint him.

That

That the subjects of Rowley's poems are in general interesting and well chosen, cannot, I think, be doubted by the judicious reader, but still it must be confessed, that the detail is occasionally heavy, flat, and insipid. The imagery and metaphors are frequently very common-place, and it is possible to labour through several stanzas without finding any striking beauty, when the attention of the reader is kept alive by the subject alone. Many defects of style, and many passages of rant and bombast are concealed or excused by the appearance of antiquity; and where the harmony of the verse (which indeed is not often the case) is, perhaps, radically deficient, we are inclined to attribute it to a different mode of accenting, or to our ignorance of the ancient pronunciation.

The piece of most conspicuous merit in the collection, is *Ella*, a Tragical Interlude, which is a most complete and well-

well-written tragedy. The plot is both interesting and full of variety, though the dialogue is in some places tedious. The character of Celmonde reminds us of Glenalvon in Douglas, but it is better drawn: His soliloquy is beautiful and characteristic *. The first chorus, or "Mynstrelles Song" in this piece, is a perfect

* CELMONDE.

Hope, hallie fuster, sweepeynge thro' the skie,
 In crowne of goulde, and robe of lillie whyte,
 Whyche farre abroad ynne gentle ayre doe flie,
 Meetyng from distaunce the enjoyous syghte,
 Albeytte este thou takest thie hie flyghte
 Hecket ¹ ynne a myste, and wyth thyne eyne yblente,
 Nowe comest thou to mee wythe starrie lyghte;
 Ontoe thie veste the rodde sonne ys adente ²;
 The Sommer tyde, the month of Maie appere,
 Depycte wythe skylledd honde upponn thie wyde aumere.

I from a nete of hopelen am adawed,
 Awhaped ³ atte the fetyveness of daie;
 Ælla, bie nete moe thann hys myndbruche awed,
 Is gone, and I mooste followe, toe the fraie.
 Celmonde canne ne'er from anie byker staie.
 Dothe warre begynne? there's Clemonde yn the place.

Botte

¹ Wrapped closely, covered. ² fastened. ³ astonish'd.

perfect pastoral. It abounds in natural and tender sentiments, and apposite imagery, and the fertility of the author's genius

Botte whanne the warre ys donne, I'll haste awaie.
 The reste from nethe tymes masque must shew yttes face.
 I see onnumbered joies arounde mee ryse ;
 Blake ¹ stondethe future doome, and joie dothe mee alyse.

O honnoure, honnoure, whatt ys bie thee hanne ?
 Hailie the robber and the bordelyer,
 Who kens ne thee, or ys to thee bestanne,
 And nothyng does thie myckle gastnes fere.
 Faygne woulde I from mie bosomme alle thee tare.
 Thou there dysperpellest ² thie levynne-bronde ;
 Whylest mie foulgh's forwyned, thou art the gare ;
 Sleene ys mie comforte bie thie ferie honde ;
 As somme talle hylle, whann wynds doe shake the ground,
 Itte kerveth all abroad, bie brasseyng hyltren wounde.

Honnoure, whatt bee ytte ? tys a shadowes shade,
 A thyng of wychenref, an idle dreme ;
 On of the sonnis whych the clerche have made
 Menne wydhoute sprytes, and wommen for to fleme ;
 Knyghtes, who este kenne the loude dynne of the beme,
 Schulde be forgarde to fyke enfeeblyng waies,
 Make everych acte, alyche theyr soules, be breme,
 And for theyre chyvalrie alleyn have prayse,

O thou, whatteer thie name,
 Or Zabalus or Queed,
 Comme, steel mie fable spryte,
 For fremde ³ and dolesulle dede.

¹ Naked,² Scatterest,³ Strange.

nus is displayed in this little ballad; since short as it is, it contains a complete plot or fable*.

There

* M A N N E.

Tourne thee to thie Shep¹sterr ¹ fwayne;
Bryghte sonne has ne droncke the dewe
From the floures of yellowe hue;
Tourne thee, Alyce, backe agayne.

W O M A N N E.

No, bestoikerre ², I wylle go,
Softlie tryppynge o'ere the mees ³,
Lyche the sylver-footed doe,
Seekynge shelt⁴terr yn grene trees.

M A N N E.

See the moss-growne daisie'd banke,
Pereynge ynne the stre⁵me belowe;
Here we'lle sytte, yn dewie danke;
Tourne thee, Alyce, do notte goe.

W O M A N N E.

I've hearde erste mie grandame saie,
Yonge damoyfelles schulde ne bee,
Inne the swotie moonthe of Maie,
Wythe yonge menne bie the grene wode tree.

M A N N E.

Sytte thee, Alyce, sytte and harke,
Howe the ouzle ⁴ chauntes hys noate,
The chelandree ⁵, greie morn larke,
Chauntynge from theyre lyttel throate;

W O-

¹ Shepherd.

² deceiver.

³ meadows.

⁴ The black-bird.

⁵ Goldfinch.

There are extant two parts, or rather two
different copies of the Battle of Hastings.

These

W O M A N N E.

I heare them from eche grene wode tree,
Chauntinge owte so blatauntlie ¹,
Tellynge lecturnyes ² to mee,
Myfcheefe ys whanne you are nygh.

M A N N E.

See alonge the mees so grene
Pied daifies, kynge-coppes fwote ;
Alle wee see, bie non bee seene,
Nete botte shepe fettes here a fote.

W O M A N N E.

Shepster fwayne, you tare mie gratche ³.
Oute uponne ye ! lette me goe.
Leave mee fwythe, or I'lle alatche.
Robynne, thys youre dame shall knowe.

M A N N E.

See ! the crokyng brionie
Rounde the popler twyste hys spraie ;
Rounde the oake the greene ivie
Florryschethe and lyveth aie.

Lette us seate us bie thys tree,
Laughe, and syng to lovyng ayres ;
Comme, and doe notte coyen bee ;
Nature made all thynges bie payres.

Drooried

¹ Loudly. ² lectures. ³ apparel.

These appear to have been higher in the estimation of Chatterton, as well as of Dr. Milles, than most of the other productions

Drooried cattes wylle after kynde;
Gentle doves wylle kyfs and coe:

W O M A N N E.

Botte manne, hee moſte bee ywrynde,
Tylle fyr preeſte make on of two.
Tempe mee ne to the foule thyng;
I wylle no mannes lemanne be;
Tyll fyr preeſte hys ſonge doethe ſyng,
Thou ſhalt neere fynde aught of mee.

M A N N E.

Bie cure ladie her yborne,
To-morrowe, ſoone as ytte ys daie,
I'lle make thee wyfe, ne bee forſworne,
So tyde me lyfe or dethe for aie.

W O M A N N E.

Whatt dothe lette, botte thatte nowe
Wee attenes ¹, thoſ honde yn honde,
Unto divinifre ² goe,
And bee lyncked yn wedlocke bonde?

M A N N E.

I agree, and thus I plyghte
Honde, and harte, and all that's myne;
Good fyr Rogerr, do us ryghte,
Make us one, at Cothbertes ſhryne.

B O T H E.

¹ At once.

² a divine.

ductions of Rowley. When Chatterton brought the first part to Mr. Barret, being greatly pressed to produce the poem in the original hand-writing, he at last said, that he had written this poem himself for a friend; but that he had another, the copy of an original by Rowley: and being then desired to produce that poem, he brought, after some time, to Mr. Barrett, the poem which is marked in Mr. Tyrwhit's and Dr. Milles's editions, as No. 2 *.

The first of these poems I cannot help classing among the most inferior of Rowley's. The mere detail of violence and carnage, with nothing to interest curiosity, or engage the more tender passions,

can

B O T H E.

We wylle ynn a bordelle ¹ lyve,
 Hailie, thoughe of no estate;
 Everyche clocke moe love shall gyve;
 Wee ynn godenesse wylle bee grete.

¹ A cottage.

* Introd. Account prefixed to Rowley's poems, p. 21.

can be pleasing to few readers. There is not a single episode to enliven the tedious narrative, and but few of the beauties of poetry to relieve the mind from the disgusting subject.

The second part is far superior. There is more of poetical description in it, more of nature, more of character. The imagery is more animated, the incidents more varied. The character of Tancarville is well drawn, and the spirit of candour and humanity which pervades it, is perhaps unparalleled in any writer before the age of Shakespear. The whole episode of Gyrtha is well conducted, and the altercation between him and his brother Harold, is interesting. But the description of morning *, and that of Salisbury plain

* And now the greie.eyd morne with vi'lets drest,
Shakyng the dewdrops on the flourie meedes,
Fled with her rosie radiance to the West :
Forth from the Easterne gatte the fyerie steedes

plain*, would be alone sufficient to rescue the whole poem from oblivion, and to entitle it to a place upon a classic shelf.

The

Of the bright sunne awaytynge spirits leedes :
 The sunne, in fierie pompe enthroned on hie,
 Swyfter than thoughte alonge hys jernie gledes,
 And scatters nyghtes remaynes from oute the skie :
 He sawe the armies make for bloudie fraie,
 And stopt his driving steeds, and hid his lyghtsome raye.

* Where fruytles heathes and meadows cladde in greie,
 Save where derne hawthornes reare theyr humble heade,
 The hungrie traveller upon his waie
 Sees a huge defarte alle arounde hym spredde,
 The distaunte citie scantlie to be spedde,
 The curlynge force of smoke he sees in vayne,
 Tis too far distaunte, and hys onlie bedde
 Iwimpled in hys cloke ys on the playne,
 Whylste rattlynge thonder forrey oer his hedde,
 And raines come down to wette hys harde uncouthlie bedde.

A wondrous pyle of rugged mountaynes standes,
 Placd on eche other in a dreare arraie,
 It ne could be the worke of human handes,
 It ne was reared up bie menne of claie.
 Here did the Brutons adoration paye
 To the false god whom they did Tauran name,
 Dightynge hys altarre with greete fyres in Maie,
 Roastyng their vyctualle round aboute the flame,
 'Twas here that Hengyst did the Brytons flee,
 As they were mette in council for to bee.

The utmost efforts of the author, however, cannot always impart interest or variety to the dull catalogue of names, which have ceased to be remembered, and the unvaried recital of wounds and deaths. But Homer himself nods when engaged upon a topic so unfavourable to genius.

The Bristowe Tragedy, or the Deathe of Syr Charles Bawdin, has little but its pathetic simplicity to recommend it. There is nothing ingenious in the plot, or striking in the execution; and it only ranks upon a par with a number of tragic ballads, both ancient and modern, in the same style.

The eclogues are to be accounted some of the most perfect specimens among the poems of Rowley. Indeed, I am not acquainted with any pastorals superior to them, either ancient or modern. The first of them bears a remote resemblance to the first eclogue of Virgil;

M 2

and

and contains a beautiful and pathetic picture of the state of England, during the civil wars between the houses of York and Lancaster. The thoughts and images are all truly pastoral; and it is impossible to read it, without experiencing those lively, yet melancholy feelings, which a true delineation of nature alone can inspire. I cannot help feeling an irresistible inclination to present the reader with two stanzas, which have ever appeared to me particularly beautiful.

R A U F E.

Saie to mee nete; I kenne thie woe in myne;
 O! I've a tale that Sabalus ¹ mote ² telle.
 Swote ³ flouretts, mantled meadows, forestes dygne ⁴;
 Gravots ⁵ far-kend ⁶ arounde the Errmiets ⁷ cell;
 The swote ribible ⁸ dynning ⁹ yn the dell;
 | The joyous daunceynge ynn the hoastrie ¹⁰ courte;
 Eke ¹¹ the highe songe and everych joie farewell,
 Farewell the verie shade of fayre dysporte ¹²;
 Impestering ¹³ trobble onn mie heade doe comme,
 Ne on kynde Seyncte to warde ¹⁴ the aye ¹⁵ encreafynge dome.

R O-

¹ The Devil. ² might. ³ sweet. ⁴ good, neat, genteel:
⁵ groves, sometimes used for a coppice. ⁶ far-seen. ⁷ Hermit.
⁸ violin. ⁹ sounding. ¹⁰ inn, or public-house. ¹¹ also. ¹² pleasure.
¹³ annoying. ¹⁴ to keep off. ¹⁵ ever, always.

ROBERTE.

Oh! I coulde waile mie kynge-coppe-decked mees ¹⁶,
 Mie spreedyng flockes of shepe of lillie white,
 Mie tendre applynges ¹⁷, and embodyde ¹⁸ trees,
 Mie Parker's Grange ¹⁹, far spreedyng to the syghte,
 Mie cuyen ²⁰ kyne ²¹, mie bullockes stringe ²² yn fyghte,
 Mie gorne ²³ emblaunched ²⁴ with the comfreie ²⁵ plante,
 Mie floure ²⁶ Seynste Marie shotteyng wyth the lyghte,
 Mie store of all the blessinges Heaven can grant,
 I amme dureffed ²⁷ unto sorrowes blowe,
 Ihanten'd ²⁸ to the peyne, will lette ne salte teare flowe.

¹⁶ Meadows. ¹⁷ grafted trees. ¹⁸ thick, stout. ¹⁹ liberty of pasture given to the Parker. ²⁰ tender. ²¹ cows. ²² strong. ²³ garden. ²⁴ whitened. ²⁵ cumfrey, a favourite dish at that time. ²⁶ marygold. ²⁷ hardened. ²⁸ accustomed.

The second eclogue is an eulogium on the actions of Richard I. in the Holyland, which will be read with additional pleasure by those who have seen the short but spirited sketch of these wars in Mr. Gibbon's last volumes. The poem is supposed to be sung by a young shepherd, whose father is absent on the Holy war; and the Epode, or burthen, is happily imagined:

"Sprytes of the blest, and every seynste ydedde,
 "Pour out your pleasaunce on my fadre's hedde."

M 3

Before

Before he has concluded his song, he is cheered by the sight of the vessel in which his father returns victorious.

The third pastoral is chiefly to be admired for its excellent morality; it is, however, enlivened by a variety of appropriate imagery, and many of the ornaments of true poetry.

The last of these pastorals, called *Elinore and Juga*, is one of the finest pathetic tales I have ever read. The complaint of two young females lamenting their lovers slain in the wars of York and Lancaster, was one of the happiest subjects that could be chosen for a tragic pastoral. Two stanzas of this poem, will, I flatter myself, amply justify this opinion: part of the former has been supposed, by the Anti-Rowleians, to be an imitation of a stanza in Mr. Gray's elegy,

“The breezy call of incense breathing morn, &c.”

E L I N-

ELINOURE

No moe the miskynette ¹ shall wake the morne,
 The minstrelle daunce, good cheere, and morryce plaie;
 No moe the amblynge palfrie and the horne
 Shall from the leffel ² rouze the foxe awaie;
 I'll seke the foreste alle the lyve-longe daie;
 Alle nete amenge the gravde chyrche ³ glebe will goe,
 And to the passante Spryghtes lecture ⁴ mie tale of woe.

JUGA.

Whan mokie ⁵ cloudis do hange upon the leme
 Of leden ⁶ Moon, ynn sylver mantels dyghte;
 The tryppeynge Faeries weve the golden dreme
 Of Selynefs ⁷, whyche flyethe wythe the nyghte;
 Thenne (botte the Seynctes forbydde!) gif to a spryte
 Syrr Rychardes forme ys lyped, I'll holde dysstraughte
 Hys bledeynge claie-colde corse, and die eche daie ynn
 thoughte.

¹ A small bagpipe. ² in a confined sense, a bush or hedge, though sometimes used as a forest. ³ church-yard. ⁴ relate. ⁵ black.
⁶ decreasing. ⁷ happiness.

The ballad of Charity is an imitation of the most beautiful and affecting of our Saviour's parables, the good Samaritan.—The poetical descriptions are truly picturesque. We feel the horror of the dark, cold night; we see "the big drops fall," and the "full flocks driving o'er

M 4

the

the plain." "The welkin opens, and the yellow light'ning flies." "The thunder's rattling found moves slowly on, and swelling, bursts into a violent crash; shakes the high spire," &c. If Chatterton were really the author of this poem, he probably alluded to his own deserted situation, since, it is said, he gave it to the publisher of the Town and Country Magazine, only a month before his death:

"Haste to thie church-glebe house 1 ashrewed 2 manne!

"Haste to thie kiste 3, thie only dortouse 4 bedde.

"Cale as the claie, whiche will gre on thie hedde,

"Is charitie and love aminge 5 highe elves;

"Knights and barons live for pleasure and themselves."

1 The grave. 2 unfortunate. 3 coffin. 4 a sleeping room. 5 among

The lesser pieces in this collection are not without merit. There is much elegant satire in the two epistles to Canynge prefixed to Ella*; and some strokes of pleasantry in the "Storie of Canynge."

As

* I have selected the first of these epistles as a specimen of the satiric powers of Rowley.

'Tys

As a complete specimen of this author's
abilities in Lyric composition, it is only
necessary

'Tys songe bie mynstrelles, thatte yn auntyent tym,
Whan Reasonn hylt ¹ herselfe in cloudes of nyghte,
The preeste delyvered alle the lege ² yn rhym;
Lyche peyncted ³ tyltynge speares to please the syghte,
The whyche yn yttes felle use doe make moke ⁴ dere ⁵,
Syke dyd theire auntyante lee deftlie ⁶ delyghte the eare.
Perchaunce yn Vyrtnes gare ⁷ rhym mote bee thenne,
Butte este ⁸ nowe flyeth to the odher fyde;
In hallie ⁹ preeste apperes the ribaudes ¹⁰ penne,
Inne lithe ¹¹ moncke apperes the barronnes pryde:
But rhym wythe somme, as nedere ¹² widhout teethe,
Make pleasaunce to the sence, botte maie do lyttel scathe ¹³.
Syr Johne, a knyghte, who hath a barne of lore ¹⁴,
Kenns ¹⁵ Latyn att fyrst syghte from Frenche or Greke,
Pyghethe ¹⁶ hys knowlacheinge ¹⁷ ten yeres or more,
To ryng upon the Latynne worde to speke.
Whoever spekethe Englysch ys despyfed,
The Englysch hym to please mooste fyrste be latynized.
Vevyan, a moncke, good a requiem ¹⁸ synges;
Can preache so wele, eche hynde ¹⁹ hys meneynge knowes;
Albeytte these gode guyfts awaie he flynges,
Beeynge as badde yn vearse as goode yn prose.
Hee synges of feynctes who dyed for yer Godde,
Everych wynter nyghte afresche he sheddes theyr blodde.

To

¹ Hid, concealed. ² law. ³ painted. ⁴ much. ⁵ hurt, damage.
⁶ sweetly. ⁷ cause. ⁸ oft. ⁹ holy. ¹⁰ rake, lewd person. ¹¹ hum-
ble. ¹² adder. ¹³ hurt, damage. ¹⁴ learning. ¹⁵ knows. ¹⁶ plucks
or tortures. ¹⁷ knowledge. ¹⁸ a service used over the dead. ¹⁹ pea-
sant.

necessary to cite the incomparable ode or
chorus

To maydens, hufwyfes, and unlored ²⁰ dames,
Hee redes hys tales of merrymment & woe.
Loughe ²¹ loudie dynneth ²² from the dolte ²³ adrames ²⁴ ;
He swelles on laudes of fooles, tho' kennes ²⁵ hem foe.
Sommetyme at tragedie theie laughe and fynge,
At merrie yaped ²⁶ fage ²⁷ fomme hard-drayned water brynge.

Yette Vevyan ys ne foole, beyinde ²⁸ hys lynes.
Geofroie makes vearse, as handycrafts theyr ware ;
Wordes wythoute fenfe fulle groffynge ²⁹ he twynes,
Cotteynge hys storie off as wythe a sheere ;
Waytes monthes on nothyng, & hys storie donne,
Ne moe you from ytte kenn, than gyf ³⁰ you neere begonne.

Enowe of odhers ; of miefelfe to write,
Requyrnge whatt I doe notte nowe possiefs,
To you I leave the taske ; I kenne your myghte
Wyll make mie faultes, mie meynthe ³¹ of faultes, be lefs,
ÆLLA wythe thys I sende, and hope that you
Wylle from ytte caste awaie, whatte lynes maie be untrue.

Playes made from hallie ³² tales I holde unmeete ;
Lette fomme greate storie of a manne be fonge ;
Whanne, as a manne, we Godde and Jesus treate,
In mie pore mynde, we doe the Godhedde wronge.
Botte lette ne wordes, whyche ³³ droorie mote ne heare,
Bee placed yn the fame. Adieu untyll anere ³⁴.

THOMAS ROWLEIE.

²⁰ Unlearned. ²¹ laugh. ²² sounds. ²³ foolish. ²⁴ churls.
²⁵ knows. ²⁶ laughable. ²⁷ tale, jest. ²⁸ beyond. ²⁹ foolishly.
³⁰ if. ³¹ many. ³² holy. ³³ strange perversion of words. *Droorie*
in its ancient signification stood for *modesty*. ³⁴ another.

chorus in Goddwyn, a tragedy, which he has left imperfect.

CHORUS, &c.

When Freedome, dreste yn blodde-steyned veste,
To everie knyghte her warre-songe sunge,
Uponne her hedde wylde wedes were spredde;
A gorie anlace bye her honge.

She daunced onne the heathe;
She hearde the voice of deathe;

Pale-eyned affryghte, hys harte of sylver hue,
In vayne assayled ¹ her bosomme to acale ²;
She hearde onflemmed ³ the shrieking voice of woe,
And sadnesse ynne the owlette shake the dale.

She shooke the burled ⁴ speere,
On hie she jesse ⁵ her sheelde,
Her foemen ⁶ all appere,
And flizze ⁷ alonge the feelde.

Power, wythe his heafod ⁸ straught ⁹ ynto the skyes,
Hys speere a sonne-beame, and his sheelde a starre,
Alyche ¹⁰ twaie ¹¹ brendeynge ¹² gronfyres ¹³ rolls hys eyes,
Chastes ¹⁴ with hys yronne feete and foundes to war.

She fytted upon a rocke,
She bendes before hys speere,
She ryfes from the shocke,
Wielding her owne in ayre.

Harde as the thonder dothe she drive ytte on,
Wyte scillye ¹⁵ wymped ¹⁶ gies ¹⁷ ytte to his crowne,

Hys

¹ Endeavoured. ² freeze. ³ undismayed. ⁴ armed, pointed.
⁵ hoisted on high, raised. ⁶ foes, enemies. ⁷ fly. ⁸ head. ⁹ stretched.
¹⁰ like. ¹¹ two. ¹² flaming. ¹³ meteors. ¹⁴ beats, stamps.
¹⁵ closely. ¹⁶ mantled, covered. ¹⁷ guides.

Hys longe sharpe spere, hys spreddyng sheelde is gon,
He falles, and fallynge rolleth thousandes down.

War, goare-faced war, bie envie burld ¹⁸, arift ¹⁹,
Hys feerie heaulme ²⁰ noddynge to the ayre,
Tenne bloddie arrowes ynne hys streynynge fyfte—

* * * * *

¹⁸ Armed. ¹⁹ arose. ²⁰ helmet.

The poems of Rowley had not been long made public before their authenticity underwent a severe scrutiny; and a number of gentlemen conversant in antiquities, declared, that they could not be the productions of the fifteenth century, and openly pronounced them the forgeries of Chatterton. Their authenticity was defended by other persons of no inconsiderable note in the literary world. The controversy soon became voluminous; and the reader will not be inclined to consider it as unimportant, when on one side the names of Walpole, Tyrwhitt, Warton*, Croft,

* I have been well informed that both Mr. Warton and Mr. Tyrwhitt were formerly of sentiments directly opposite to those which they profess in their publications; if the poems therefore be forgeries of Chatterton, these gentlemen were at least among the first on whom he imposed.

Croft, and Malone, are mentioned: and on the other, those of Milles and Bryant; and I think I may venture to add, that of Mr. Matthias, though his candour and modesty, almost exempt him from being considered as a partizan.

I shall endeavour to exhibit a short sketch of the arguments on both sides of the question, and shall leave my readers to form their own conclusions.

The evidence on this subject naturally divides itself into two branches, external and internal: of the former, there is little satisfactory to be obtained; and it must be confessed, that the bulk of the external evidence is rather against that party which denies the authenticity of the poems. There are, however, a few facts on that side of the question which are of too much consequence to be disregarded.

ARGU-

ARGUMENTS AGAINST the AUTHENTICITY of ROWLEY'S POEMS.

External Evidence.

I. The first serious objection which occurs against the authenticity of the poems, is, that Chatterton never could be prevailed upon to produce more than four of the originals, and these extremely short, the whole not containing more than 124 verses *. Had such a treasure of ancient poetry fallen into the hands of a young and ingenuous person, would he, it is said, have cautiously produced them to the world one by one? Would he not rather have been proud of his good fortune? Would not the communicativeness of youth have induced him to blaze the discovery abroad, and to call every lover of poetry and antiquity, to a participation of the pleasure?

* Tyrwhitt's Vindication, p. 133.

pleasure? Would not the hope and offers of reward at least have prevented his destroying what, if preserved, would certainly be productive of profit, but the destruction of which could answer no purpose whatever * ?

II. The deficiency of proof in favour of Rowley, is strongly aided by the very probable proofs in favour of Chatterton. His abilities were in every respect calculated for such a deception. He had been in the habit of writing verses from his earliest youth, and produced some excellent poetry. He was known to have been conversant with our old English poets and historians, particularly Chaucer. His fondness for heraldry, introduced many books of antiquities to his notice; and
even

* An examination, &c. p. 9. Tyrwhitt's Vindication, p. 155. See also some excellent remarks to the same purpose, by the late Mr. Badcock, Monthly Review for May, 1782.

even his profession disposed him to these studies, and enabled him with facility to imitate ancient writings. In *the Christmas games*, which are acknowledged to be his own, there is much of that peculiar learning in British antiquities, which was necessary to lay the foundation of Rowley's poems; and in his Essay on Sculpture, there is much of the same general information with which those compositions abound *. The transport and delight,

* In the supplement to the works of Chatterton, (printed for Becket, 1784,) there is inserted a piece which has been already referred to, called Chatterton's will. This appears to have been written a few days before he left Bristol to go to London; when in consequence, as it should seem, of his being refused a small sum of money by a gentleman, whom he had occasionally complimented in his poems, he had taken a resolution of destroying himself the next day. What prevented him from carrying this design at that time into execution does not appear; but the whole writing on this occasion is worth attention, as it throws much light on his real character, his acquaintance with old English writers, and his capability of understanding and imitating old French and Latin inscriptions, not indeed grammatically, but sufficient to answer the purposes

light, which Chatterton always discovered on reading the poems to Mr. Smith, his sister, and his different friends, could not, it is said, have resulted from the mere pleasure of a discovery: it was the secret, but ardent feeling of his own abilities, and the consciousness that the praises which were bestowed upon them were all his own, which filled him with exultation, and

to which he often applied this knowledge. From this writing it also appears that he would not allow King David to have been a holy man, from the strains of piety and devotion in his psalms, because a *great genius can effect any thing*; that is, *assume any character and mode of writing* he pleases. This is an answer from Chatterton himself, to one argument, and a very powerful one, in support of the authenticity of Rowley's poems. In that part of the will addressed to Mr. George Catcott, Chatterton mentions Rowley's poems, but in so guarded a manner, that it is not easy to draw any certain information for or against their authenticity; though the parties on both sides have attempted it. The address to Mr. Barrett does no less credit to his own feelings, than to that gentleman's treatment of him; and the apology that follows to the two Mr. Catcotts, for some effusions of his satire upon them, is the best recompence he then had in his power to make to those gentlemen, from whom he had experienced much civility and kindness. O.

and produced those strong emotions, which even his habitual reserve on this subject was unable to conceal *.

III. The declaration of Chatterton to Mr. Barrett, concerning the first part of the Battle of Hastings, which he confessed *he had written himself*, is a presumption against the rest. He was then taken by surprise, but at other times preserved a degree of consistency in his falsehood.

IV. Mr. Ruddall, an intimate acquaintance of Chatterton, declared to Mr. Croft, that he saw him (Chatterton) disguise several pieces of parchment with the appearances of age, and that Chatterton told him, that the parchment which Mr. Ruddall had assisted him in blacking and disguising, was the very parchment he had sent to the printer's, containing

* Monthly Review for March 1782.

taining "the account of the Fryers passing the old bridge *."

V. The

* "To GEORGE STEEVENS, Esq. Hampstead Heath.

"DEAR SIR,

"IT gives me pleasure that LOVE AND MADNESS, which I put together in a few idle hours, as much for the sake of doing justice to poor Chatterton as of blunting the edge of Hackman's shocking example, has so well answered the former purpose.

" ——— Where'er (his bones at rest)

"His spryte to haunte delyghteth beste,"

Chatterton must be now not a little gratified when he looks down upon the squabbles he has raised on earth. Every syllable which I have made Hackman relate of him in LOVE AND MADNESS is, I firmly believe, religiously true. Walmsly was my tenant for the house in Shoreditch, where Chatterton lodged with him, at the time he gave me the information contained in my book. Chatterton's letters which I printed, and which are hardly less singular perhaps than Rowley's poems, are confessedly original.

"As I cannot spare time from my profession to enter any further into this dispute, and as you inform me that Mr. Warton is going to publish something, I write this letter, according to your desire, in answer to your's of yesterday, respecting what long since I said to you of Mr. Ruddall; and it is perfectly at Mr. Warton's service. But I must desire he will print it exactly as I send it you. When I have spoken for myself, he may draw his own arguments from my communication.

V. The Rev. Mr. Catcott, brother to the Mr. Catcott before mentioned, affirmed,

“ The left hand column is an extract from Dean Milles’s quarto edition of Rowley’s, i. e. of Chatterton’s poems, p. 436, 7. The right hand column is my account of the same business. In some material circumstances he certainly errs. It were easy to shew, the Dean has condemned Chatterton, and robbed him of Rowley’s poems upon slighter evidence of less material mistakes.

“ That the Dean should have received *all* his information of this business from Mr. Ruddall, is certainly impossible, because some part of his account of it is certainly untrue. The passages in the Dean’s account, on which I comment, are marked, that they may be printed in Italics.

—“ A *singular* circumstance relating to the history of this ceremony (“ of passing the “ old bridge”) *has been communicated to the Publick within these two last years;* and candour requires that it should not pass unnoticed here, especially as the character of the relator leaves no room for suspicion. The objectors to the authenticity of these poems may possibly triumph in the discovery of a fact, which contains, in their opinion, a decisive proof that Chatterton

The circumstance is singular, and I have always thought so; but it has never yet, I believe, been *communicated to the Publick*; though I certainly meant it should some time or other.

firmed, that having had a conversation one evening with Chatterton, he traced the
very

Chatterton was the author of this paper, and (as they would infer) of all the poetry which he produced under Rowley's name; but, *when the circumstances are attentively examined*, the reader will probably find, that even this fact tends rather to establish, than to invalidate, the authenticity of the poems.

Mr. John Ruddall, a native and inhabitant of Bristol, and formerly apprentice to Mr. Francis Gresley, an apothecary in that city, was well acquainted with Chatterton, whilst he was apprentice to Mr. Lambert. During that time, Chatterton frequently called upon him at his master's house, and, *soon after he had printed this account of the Bridge in the Bristol paper, told Mr. Ruddall, that he was the author of it; but, it occurring to him afterwards, that he might be called upon to produce the original, he brought*

It is not clear to me, that the advocates for Chatterton have occasion to be apprehensive, *if the circumstances should be attentively examined* even according to the Dean's own shewing. But mine is somewhat different.

very substance of this conversation, in a piece which that indefatigable genius produced sometime after as Rowley's.

VI. Chat-

to him one day a piece of Parchment, about the size of a half Sheet of Fool's - Cap paper; Mr. Ruddall does not think that any thing was written on it when produced by Chatterton, but he saw him write several Words, if not lines, in a Character which Mr. Ruddall did not understand, which he says was totally unlike English, and, as he apprehended, was meant by Chatterton, to imitate or represent the original from which this Account was printed. He cannot determine precisely how much Chatterton wrote in this manner, but says, that the time he spent in that Visit did not exceed three quarters of an hour; the Size of the Parchment, however, (even supposing it to have been filled with writing) will in some measure ascertain the quantity which it contained,

My visit to Bristol of a few days, in order to collect information concerning Chatterton, was on the 23d of July, 1778. At that time I gave something to the Mother and Sister for their voluntary communications to me. After I published LOVE AND MADNESS, I laid a larger plan for their benefit, which I hope still to see carried into execution; and I destined something more to the family of him whose genius I so much respected, though I well knew his family deemed me their enemy for endeavouring to prove him guilty of Forgery. Prevented from going to Bath, and consequently from giving what I had set apart for this purpose, with my own Hands, I gladly seized the liberty allowed me by a friend of Mr. Ruddall to beg this favour of him. On the

VI. Chatterton at first exhibited the Songe to Ella in his own hand-writing; and afterwards in the parchment, which he gave

the 22d of March, 1781, I wrote to Mr. Ruddall, to whom I was then a perfect stranger, making use of his Friend's name, and enclosing a Draught to him or his order for ten pounds, requesting he would give the Money to Chatterton's Mother and Sister. On the 30th of the same Month, Mr. Ruddall called upon me in Lincoln's Inn; appeared, as I imagined, to lean to the side of this question which I have ever thought to be the right; and told me, of his own accord, what certainly agrees no more with the Dean's account, than what I have already related agrees with the Dean's saying that Mr. Ruddall told this, *in 1779, on the prospect of procuring a gratuity of ten Pounds for Chatterton's Mother, from a Gentleman who came to Bris-*

gave to Mr. Barrett as the original, there were found several variations, which it is supposed

tol in order to collect information concerning the Son's History.

He says also, that *when Chatterton had written on the Parchment, he held it over the Candle, to give it the appearance of antiquity, which changed the Colour of the Ink, and made the Parchment appear black and a little contracted: he never saw him make any similar attempt, nor was the Parchment produced afterwards by Chatterton to him, or (as far as he knows) to any other person. From a perfect knowledge of Chatterton's abilities, he thinks him to have been incapable of writing the Battle of Hastings, or any of those Poems produced by him under the name of Rowley, nor does he remember that Chatterton ever mentioned Rowley's Poems to him, either as original or the contrary; but sometimes (though very rarely) intimated*

If my Memory not only fails me now, but failed me the same day, and has failed me ever since, Mr. Ruddall will correct me. To him I appeal, and by him I must submit to be corrected. But, on the 30th of March, 1781, he told me, AS I THINK, that he assisted Chatterton in disguising SEVERAL pieces of Parchment with the appearances of Age, just before "the Account of passing the Bridge" appeared in Farley's Journal; that, after they had made several experiments, Chatterton said, "this will do, now I will black THE Parchment;" that, whether he told him at the time what THE Parchment was, he could not remember; that he believed he did not see Chatterton black THE Parchment, but that Chatterton told him, after

supposed he had admitted through forgetfulness, or perhaps, as actual corrections, considering

mated that he was possessed of some valuable literary productions. Mr. Ruddall had promised Chatterton not to reveal this Secret, and he scrupulously kept his word till the year 1779; but, ON THE PROSPECT OF PROCURING A GRATUITY OF TEN POUNDS, FOR CHATTERTON'S MOTHER, FROM A GENTLEMAN WHO CAME TO BRISTOL IN ORDER TO COLLECT INFORMATION CONCERNING HER SON'S HISTORY, he thought so material a benefit to the Family would fully justify him for divulging a secret by which no person now living could be a sufferer."

after "the Account of passing the Bridge" had appeared in the News-paper, that THE Parchment which he had blacked and disguised, after their experiments, was what he had sent to the Printer containing the ACCOUNT."

"As this appeared to me the most decisive evidence, I asked Mr. Ruddall's leave to make use of his name about it, which he granted me; and I made a Memorandum of it, the same day, at the distance of a few hours. But it is still possible my Memory might deceive me. In matters more serious than the authenticity of Poems, which are certainly

considering that the parchment was the copy which probably would be resorted to as a standard *.

VII. The

certainly exquisite, whoever wrote them, it is not my way, I hope, to be more positive than I ought.

“Mr. Ruddall will excuse me if I say, that I cannot possibly allow him, or any one, to determine the authenticity of the Poems, by telling the Dean, or the world, that, *“from a perfect knowledge of Chatterton’s abilities, he* *“thinks him to have been incapable of writing the Battle of* *“Hastings, or any of those Poems produced by him under* *“the name of Rowley.”*”

“It appears to me that I cannot possibly, all this time, have been noticing what does not relate to me, because Chatterton’s Sister, when she thanks me in a Letter dated April the 20th, 1781, for what I sent her and her Mother, through Mr. Ruddall, says, that “the only benefits they “have reaped from *the labours of her dear Brother,*” are what they have received from me.

“Convey this to Mr. Warton, if you choose it, with many thanks for the pleasure I have received from his History of English Poetry ; and believe me to be,

“Dear Sir,

“Your obliged friend,

Lincolns-inn,
Feb. 5, 1782.

“HERBERT CROFT, jun.”

* Curfory Observations on Rowley’s poems, p. 44.

VII. The hand-writing of the fragment containing the storie of W. Canynge, is quite different from the hand-writing of that which contains "the accounte of W. Canynges feast;" and neither of them is written in the usual record hand of the age to which they are attributed. Indeed, in the "accounte of W. Canynges Feaste," the Arabian numerals, (63) are said to be perfectly modern, totally different from the figures used in the fifteenth century, and exactly such as Chatterton himself was accustomed to make*.

VIII. The very existence of any such person as ROWLEY is questioned, and upon apparently good ground. He is not so much as noticed by William of Worcestre, who lived nearly about the supposed time of Rowley, was himself of Bristol, and makes frequent

* See Milles's Rowley, p. 429. Tyrwhitt's Vindication, p. 135. Monthly Review, by Badcock, for March 1782.

frequent mention of Canynge. “Bale, who lived two hundred years nearer to Rowley than we, and who, by unwearied industry, dug a thousand bad authors out of obscurity,” has never taken the least notice of such a person*; nor yet Leland, Pitts, or Tanner, nor indeed any other literary biographer. That no copies of any of his works should exist, but those deposited in Redcliffe church, is also an unaccountable circumstance not easy to be surmounted†.

IX. Objections are even made to the manner in which the poems are said to have been preserved. That title deeds relating to the church or even historical records might be lodged in the muniment room of Redcliffe church, is allowed to be sufficiently probable; but that *poems* should have been consigned to a chest

* Walpole's two letters, p. 31.

† Tyrwhitt's Vindication, p. 119, 121.

chest with fix keys, kept in a private room in a church with title deeds and conveyances, and that these keys should be intrusted, not to the heads of a college, or any literary society, but to aldermen and church-wardens, is a supposition replete with absurdity; and the improbability is increased, when we consider that these very papers passed through the hands of persons of some literature, of Chatterton's father in particular, who had a taste for poetry, and yet without the least discovery of their intrinsic value*.

Internal Evidence.

I. In point of **STYLE, COMPOSITION,** and **SENTIMENT**, it is urged by Mr. Warton, and those who adopt the same side of the controversy, that the poems of Rowley are infinitely superior to every other production of the century, which is
said

* See Monthly Review for March 1782.

said to have produced them. Our ancient poets are minute and particular, they do not deal in abstraction and general exhibition, but dwell on realities; but the writer of these poems adopts ideal terms and artificial modes of explaining a fact, and employs too frequently the aid of metaphor and personification*. Our ancient bards abound in unnatural conceptions, strange imaginations, and even the most ridiculous inconsistencies; but Rowley's poems present us with no incongruous combinations, no mixture of manners, institutions, usages and characters: they contain no violent or gross improprieties†. One of the striking characteristics of old English poetry, is a continued tenor of disparity. In Gower, Chaucer, and Lydgate, elegant descriptions, ornamental images, &c. bear no proportion

* Matthias's Essay on Evid, p. 64

† Warton's Inquiry, p. 21.

proportion to pages of languor, mediocrity, prosaic and uninteresting details ; but the poems in question are uniformly supported, and are throughout poetical and animated *. Poetry, like other sciences (say these critics) has its gradual accessions and advancements ; and the poems in question possess all that elegance, firmness of contexture, strength and brilliancy, which did not appear in our poetry before the middle of the present century.

II. There appears in these poems none of that LEARNING, which peculiarly marks all the compositions of the fifteenth century. Our old poets are perpetually confounding Gothic and classical allusions ; Ovid and St. Austin are sometimes cited in the same line. A studious ecclesiastic of that period would give us a variety of useless authorities
from

* Ibid. p. 20 ; Monthly Review, May 1782.

from Aristotle, from Boethius, and from the Fathers : and the whole would be interspersed with allusions to another kind of reading, viz. the old romances ; the round table, with Sir Launcelott, and Sir Tristram, and Charlemagne, would have been constantly cited *. Poems from such an author, would also have occasionally exhibited prolix devotional episodes, mingled with texts of Scripture, and addresses to the Saints and blessed Virgin ; instead of apostrophes to such allegorical divinities as Truth and Content, and others of Pagan original †.

As to the historical allusions which are really found in these poems, it is asserted, that they are only such as might be supplied by books which are easily obtained, such as Hollingshead and Fox, Fuller's church history, Geofry of Monmouth, and
others

* Warton's Inquiry, 21, 97, 99.

† Ibid 98.

others of a similar nature*; and that general reading has been mistaken for profound erudition†.

II. Some ANACHRONISMS have also been pointed out in the manuscripts of Rowley. Thus the art of *knitting stockings* is alluded to in the Tragedy of Ella‡; whereas it is a well established fact,

* Matthias's Essay, p. 69. An Examination of Rowley's Poems, p. 24.

† Warton's Inquiry.

‡ As Elynour bie the green leffelle was syttynge,
As from the sones hete she harried,
She sayde, as herr whytte hondes whyte hosen was knyt
tynge,
Whatte pleafure ytt ys to be married!

Mie husbande, Lorde Thomas, a forrefter boulde,
As ever clove pynne, or the baskette,
Does no cheryfauncys from Elynour houlde,
I have ytte as soone as I aske ytte.

Whann I lyved wyth mie fadre yn merrie Clowd-dell,
Tho' twas at my liefes to mynde spynnyng,
I styll wanted somethynge, botte whatte ne coulde telle,
Mie lorde fadres barbde haulle han ne wynnyng.

fact, that the art was utterly unknown in the reign of Edward IV. Bristol is called a city, though it was not such till long after the death of that monarch. Canynge is said to have possessed a *cabinet* of coins, *drawings*, &c. though these words were not then in use; and *manuscripts* are spoken of as rarities, at a time when there were scarcely any other books: when, in truth, a printed book must have been a much greater curiosity *.

IV. The

Eche monyng I ryse, doe I sette mie maydennes,
 Somme to spynn, somme to curdell, somme bleachynge,
 Gyff any new entered doe aske for mie aidens,
 Thann swythynne you fynde mee a teachynge.

Lorde Walterre, mie fadre, he loved me welle,
 And nothyng unto mee was nedeynge,
 Botte schulde I agen goe to merrie Cloud-dell,
 In sothen twoulde bee wythoute redeyng.

Shee sayde, and lorde Thomas came over the lea,
 As hee the fatte derkynnes wae chacynge,
 Shee putte uppe her knyttyng, and to hym wente shee;
 So wee leave hem bothe kyndelie embracyng.

* Cursory Observations on Rowley's poems, p. 22—25.

IV. The METRE of the old English poetry, is said to be totally different from that of Rowley. The stanza in which the majority of these poems are written, consists of ten lines, the two first quatrains of which rhyme alternately, and it closes with an alexandrine; no example of which occurs in Chaucer, Lydgate or Gower. Spencer extended the old octavo stanza to nine lines, closing with an alexandrine, to which Prior added a tenth *. Above all, the extraordinary instance of an English Pindaric in the fifteenth century, is ridiculed by Mr. Warton, which novelty (he says) "was reserved for the capricious ambition of Cowley's muse." That Rowley should ever have seen the original model of this irregular style of composition, is utterly improbable, since

O 2

Pindar

* Matthias's Essay, p. 66.

Pindar was one of the last classics that emerged at the restoration of literature*.

To this head may be referred the extraordinary *smoothness of the verse*, which is utterly unparalleled in any poet for more than a century after the supposed age of Rowley†; the accent or cadence, which is always modern; and the perfection and harmony of the rhyme‡.

V. While the composition, metre, &c. are wholly modern, the LANGUAGE is asserted to be too ancient for the date of the poems. It is not the language of any particular period, but of two entire centuries§. The diction and versification are at perpetual variance||. The author appears to have borrowed all his ancient language, not from the usage of common life,

* Warton's Inquiry, p. 33, 39.

† Cursory Observations, p. 5.

‡ Matthias's Essay, p. 67.

§ Cursory Observations, p. 32.

|| Warton's Inquiry, p. 42.

life, but from Speght, Skinner, and other lexicographers, and to have copied their mistakes *. He has even introduced words which never made a part of the English language, and which are evidently the coinage of fancy, analogy, or mistake †.

VI. Notwithstanding this affectation of ancient language, it is added, that the tinsel of MODERN PHRASEOLOGY may in too many instances be detected. Thus such phrases as “ *Puerilitie* ; *before his optics* ; *blamelesstongue* ; the aucthoure of the *piece* ; vessel wreckt upon the *tragic sand* ; the *proto-sleyne man*,” &c. could not be the language of the fifteenth century. We find also a number of modern formularies and combinations, e. g. “ *Syfters in sorrow* ; *poygnant arrowes typp’d with destinie* ; *Oh, Goddes!*

O 3

Now

* Matthias’s Essay, p. 68. Tyrwhitt’s Appendix to Rowley’s Poems, and Vindication passim.

† Ibid.

Now by the Goddes ; Ah, what avaulde ;
 Awaie, awaie ! (which is the cant of modern tragedy) Oh, thou, whate'er thie name ;" with a number of compound epithets *, and other almost certain marks of modern composition †.

VIII. To these may be added some passages which appear to be imitations of modern poets. Many of those, which have been cited to convict Chatterton of plagiarism, are, it must be confessed, such obvious thoughts, that they might be adopted by a person who had never seen the modern publications in which they appear ; but such coincidences as the following are palpable ;

" O ! for a muse of fire !"

Shakef. Hen. V.

" O forre a spryte al feere !"

Ells, l. 729.

" His beard all white as snow.

" All flaxen was his pole."

Hamlet.

" Black

* Warton's Inquiry, p. 23, 24.

† Curfory Observations, p. 12, 13.

" Black his cryne as the winter nyghte,
 " White his rode, as the sommer snowe." Ella, l. 851,

" No, no, he is dead,
 " Gone to his death bed." Hamlet.

" Mie love is dedde,
 " Gone to his deathe-bedde." Ella, l. 855.

" Unhoufell'd, unanointed, *unaknell'd*,"
 Hamlet in Pope's edit.

" Unburled, undelievre, unespryte." Goddwyn, l. 27.

" Their souls from corpses *unaknell'd* depart."
 Bat. of Haft. part 1, l. 288†

" The grey-goose wing that was thereon,
 " In his hearts-blood was wet." Chevy-Chace.

" The *grey-goose* pynion, that *thereon* was sett,
 " Eftsoons wyth smokyng *crimson bloud was wett*."
 Bat. of Haft. part 1, l. 200.

With such a force and vehement might
He did his body gore,
 The spear went thro' the other side
 A large *cloth-yard* and more. Chevy-Chace.

With thilk a force it did his body gore,
 That in his tender guts it entered,
 In veritie, a full *cloth-yard* or more. Bat. of Haft *.

" Clos'd his eyes in endless night." Gray's bard.
 " He clos'd his eyne in everlastyng nyghte."
 Bat. of Haft. part 2. l. 278 †.

O 4

The

* See Monthly Review.

† See a letter prefixed to Chatterton's Miscellanies, p. 24.

The advocates of Rowley, are, however, not destitute of arguments in their support; I shall therefore divide the evidence in the same manner as in stating the former, and endeavour to exhibit as fair a summary as possible.

ARGUMENTS TO PROVE THAT THE
POEMS ATTRIBUTED TO ROWLEY,
WERE REALLY WRITTEN BY HIM
AND OTHERS IN THE 15th CENTURY.

External Evidence.

I. The first grand argument which the advocates on this side advance, is the constant and uniform assertion (except in a single instance) of Chatterton himself, who is represented by his sister, and all his intimates, as a lover of truth from the earliest dawn of reason. He was also most insatiable of fame, and abounded in vanity. He felt himself neglected, and many passages

pages of his writings are full of invective on this subject. Is it probable, that such a person should barter the fair character of truth, which he loved, for the sake of persisting in falsehood, which he detested? Is it probable, that a person of his consummate vanity, should uniformly give the honour of all his more excellent compositions to another, and only inscribe his name to those which were evidently inferior? But even though a man might be thus careless of his reputation during his life time, under the conviction that he might assume the honour whenever he pleased, would this carelessness continue even at the hour of death? Would he at a moment, when he actually meditated his own destruction; in a paper which he inscribes—"All this wrote between 11 and 2 o'clock Saturday (Evening), in the utmost distress of mind,"—still repeat with the utmost solemnity the same false
assertion

assertion that he had affirmed during the former part of his life? there was at least *no occasion* to introduce the subject at that time, and he might have been silent, if he did not chuse to close his existence with a direct falsehood *. If we consider the joy which he manifested on the discovery of the parchments, the avidity with which he read them, he must be the most complete of dissemblers, if really they contained no such treasure as he pretended. To another very extraordinary circumstance Mr. Catcott has pledged himself, which is, that on his first acquaintance with Chatterton, the latter mentioned by *name* almost all the poems which have since appeared in print, and that at a time, when, if he were the author, one-tenth of them could not be written †.

II. Next

* See Chatterton's will, Appendix to Miscellanies. See also the learned Mr. Bryant's Observations, p. 499, 547.

† Ibid. 548.

II. Next to the asseverations of Chatterton himself, we are bound to pay at least some attention to those of all his friends. His mother accurately remembers the whole transaction concerning the parchments, as I have already stated it. His sister also recollects to have seen the original parchment of the poem on our Lady's Church, and, she thinks, of the Battle of Hastings: she remembers to have heard her brother mention frequently the names of Turgot, and of John Stowe, besides that of Rowley. * Mr. Smith, who was one of the most intimate friends of Chatterton, remembers to have seen manuscripts upon vellum, to the number of a dozen in his possession, many of them ornamented with the heads of kings or of popes, and some of them as broad as the bottom of a large sized chair †. He
used

* Milles's Preliminary Dissertation, p. 8.

† Bryant's Observations, p. 528.

used frequently to read to Mr. Smith, sometimes parts, and sometimes whole treatises from these old manuscripts; and Mr. Smith has very often been present while he transcribed them at Mr. Lambert's*. Mr. Capel, a jeweller, at Bristol, assured Mr. Bryant, that he had frequently called upon Chatterton, while at Mr. Lambert's, and had at times found him transcribing ancient manuscripts answering to the former description†. Mr. Thistlethwaite, in the curious letter already quoted, relates, that during the year 1768, "at divers visits, he found Chatterton employed in copying Rowley from what he still considers as undoubted originals‡." Mr. Carey also, another intimate acquaintance, frequently heard Chatterton mention these manuscripts soon after he left Colston's school. Every
one

* Bryant's Observations.

† Ibid, p. 523.

‡ Milles's Rowley, p. 457.

one of these gentlemen, as well as Mr. Clayfield and Mr. Ruddall, declare unequivocally, from an intimate knowledge of Chatterton's learning and abilities, that they believe him incapable of producing the poems of Rowley.

III. That a number of manuscripts were found in Redcliffe church, cannot possibly be doubted after the variety of evidence which has been adduced to that purpose. Perrot, the old Sexton, who succeeded Chatterton's great uncle, took Mr. Shiercliffe, a miniature painter, of Bristol, as early as the year 1749, through Redcliffe church; he shewed him in the North porch a number of parchments, some loose and some tied up, and intimated, "that there were things there, which would one day be better known; and that in proper hands, they might prove a treasure *." Many of the manuscripts

* Bryant's Observations, p. 513.

nuscripts in Mr. Barrett's hands bear all the marks of age, and are "signed by Rowley himself. The characters in each instance appear to be similar; and the hand-writing the same in all *."

IV. The short time which Chatterton had to produce all these poems, is an extraordinary circumstance. It has been already stated, that he continued at Coulston's school from the age of eight till that of fourteen and seven months: that he continued each day in school from seven or eight o'clock till twelve in the morning, and from one till four or five in the evening, and went to bed at eight. There is also reason to believe, that he
did

Bryant's Observations p. 548. Mr. Barrett, and he only, has it in his power finally to determine the controversy concerning Rowley's poems. Let him produce all the manuscripts which he obtained from Chatterton, and let them be put into the hands of some persons conversant in old writings, who may possibly be able to decide concerning the probable date of the hand-writing. O.

did not discover or begin to copy these poems, or even to apply himself to antiquities, before the age of fifteen. In about the space therefore of two years and a half, he made himself master of the ancient language of this country; he produced more than two volumes of poetry, which are published, and about as many compositions, in prose and verse, as would nearly fill two volumes more. During this time he must have read a considerable variety of books. He was studying medicine, heraldry, and other sciences; he was practicing drawing; he copied a large book of precedents; and Mr. Lambert's business, though not extensive, must have occupied at least some part of his attention. Which, therefore, is the easier supposition, say the advocates for Rowley, that this almost miracle of industry or ability was performed by a boy; or
that

that Chatterton really copied the poems from ancient documents * ?

V. Chat-

* Of these old writings, which he is supposed to have transcribed from obscure and almost illegible manuscripts, (exclusive of his miscellaneous and political writings,) the poetical alone fills 288 octavo pages in Mr. Tywrhitt's edition; and perhaps there are others, with a quantity of prose writings which might fill another such volume. See Milles's edition, p. 438.

These must have been transcribed by him, either in Mr. Lambert's office, or during the few hours he spent at home with his mother in an evening. Neither Mr. Lambert nor his mother or sister, take upon them to say, that they ever saw him this way employed. When not engaged in the immediate business of his profession, he was employed by his master to copy forms and precedents, as well to improve him in the law as to keep him employed. Of these law forms and precedents, Mr. Lambert has in his possession a folio book containing 334 pages, closely written by Chatterton; also 36 pages in another. In the noting book, 36 notarial acts; and in the letter book, 38 letters copied.

Add to all this his *own* acknowledged compositions, filling 240 pages in the printed copy, and perhaps as many more in manuscript not yet published.

The greatest part of these compositions, both under Rowley's name and his own, was written before he went to London, in April 1770, he being then aged 17 years and five months; and of the former, Rowley's pieces, they were almost all exhibited a twelve month earlier, before April 1769.

Now

V. Chatterton is said further to have discovered great marks of ignorance on the manuscripts coming first into his possession. He read the name *Roulie* instead of Rowley, till he was set right by Mr. Barrett *. In the acknowledged writings of Chatterton, there are also palpable mistakes, and marks of ignorance in history, geography, &c. ; whereas no such appear in the poems of Rowley †. But what is of still greater consequence, Mr. Bryant has laboured to prove, that in almost innumerable instances, Chatterton did not understand the language of Rowley, but that he has actually

Now the time taken up in preparing the parchment and imitating the old writing, must probably have been greater than the time spent in composing them. If he was in possession of the originals, surely he would not have bestowed all this time and pains in transcribing from originals, which he might have parted with to greater advantage ; and if he did transcribe them, why destroy the greatest part of them, and exhibit only scraps and detached lines, for such only appear now to exist ? O.

* Remarks on Warton, p. 9.

† Bryant's Observations, p. 477.

tually misinterpreted, and sometimes mis-transcribed him. Thus in "the English metamorphosis," ver. 14.

" Their myghte is *knopped* ynne the froste of fere."

Chatterton having recourse to Chaucer and Skinner, has interpreted to *knop*, to *tie*, or *fasten*; whereas it really means, and the context requires that it should mean, to *nip*. Thus in the Second Battle of Hastings, 548, describing a sacrifice :

" Roastyng the *vyſualle* round about the flame ;"

which Mr. Tyrwhitt himself has allowed ought to be *vyſtimes*, and has accordingly cancelled the other word. Thus in Ella, v. 678, we find :

" Theyre throngyng corſes ſhall *onlyghte* the ſtarres."

The word *onlyghte*, Chatterton has here ſtrangely applied as meaning to *darken* the ſtars, whereas Mr. Byrant, by recurring to the Saxon, very reaſonably ſuppoſes *on-lych*

lych to have been the proper word, and the line will then mean to *be like*, or to equal the stars in number. The word *cherisfaunei*, which Chatterton has inserted in the "Introductionne to Ella," never did really exist, and Mr. Bryant shews that the original word was certainly *cherisfaunce*: and in the Second Eclogue, Chatterton has explained the word *amenufed*, by *lessened*, or *diminished*; whereas the same able critic shews, that it never had any such meaning, but that it really signifies *accursed* or *abominable*. These and other similar mistakes (of which Mr. Bryant specifies a great number) he asserts, could never have happened, had Chatterton been any more than the mere transcriber of these extraordinary poems*.

VI. With respect to the objection, that Rowley is not mentioned by other writers, it is answered, that there existed so

P 2

little

See Mr. Bryant's Observations, *passim*.

little communication among mankind at that time, that Leland, who is a very curious writer, never makes the smallest mention of Canynge, Lydgate, or Occleve. That William of Worcestre, does not mention Rowley, because, unless history demands it, writers do not commonly commemorate persons before their death, and Rowley was apparently alive when William of Worcestre was at Bristol. In the register of the Diocese of Wells, however, there are two persons of the name of Thomas Rowley, mentioned as admitted into Holy Orders, one of whom might be the author of the poems*. In answer to the objection, why these manuscripts remained so long unknown to the world, Mr. Bryant says, "We may not be able to account any more for these manuscripts being so long neglected, than for those of Hesychius, Phædrus, and Velleius

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* Mr. Bryant's Obs. p. 535, 543 544.

ius Paterculus having been in the same situation * : ” and with respect to the secreting of the originals by Chatterton, it is deemed a sufficient reply, that he might conceive very highly of their value, and therefore did not wish to part with them, or he might be apprehensive that they would be taken from him ; and at last, in his indignation against the world, he probably destroyed all of them that remained at the ~~time~~ when he determined upon putting an end to his existence.

VII. The concessions of the adversaries ought not to pass unnoticed on this occasion. Mr. Warton admits, "that some poems written by Rowley might have been preserved in Canynge's chest; but if there were any, they were so enlarged and improved by Chatterton, as to become entirely new compositions †;" and in a sub-

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fequent

* Ibid, 499.

† History of English Poetry.

sequent publication, says, " I will not deny that Chatterton might discover parchments of humble prose, containing local memoirs and authentic deeds, illustrating the history of Bristol. He might have discovered biographical diaries, or other notices of the lives of Canynge, Ischam, and Gorges." These concessions at least imply something of a doubt on the mind of the Laureat, concerning the existence of some important manuscripts, and seem of some consideration in the scale of controversy.

Internal Evidence in favour of the authenticity of Rowley's Poems.

I. The internal evidence (which we may call positive) on this side of the question is not very extensive, and the bulk of it consists in negative arguments, or a refutation of the adversaries' objections. The most material proof is derived from
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the ALLUSIONS TO FACTS and CUSTOMS, of which there is not much probability, that Chatterton could have a competent knowledge. Thus, if the "Dethe of Sir Charles Bawdin" be supposed, as Mr. Tyrwhitt himself thinks probable, to refer to the execution of Sir Baldwin of Fulford, the fact meets confirmation in all its circumstances, from a fragment published by Hearne, and also from a parliamentary roll of the eighth of Edward IV; neither which there is the least probability that Chatterton ever saw*. Thus the names which occur in the Battle of Hastings, may almost all be authenticated from the old historians; but they are scattered in such a variety of books, that they could not be extracted without infinite labour, and several of the books were in all probability not accessible by Chatterton.

P 4

To

* Observations on Rowley's poems, p. 14.

To this head we may refer many particulars concerning Canynge, &c. as related by Chatterton, such as his paying 3000 marks to the king, *pro pace sua habenda*, &c. which are confirmed in an extraordinary manner by W. of Worcestre, whose book was not made public till 1778, and which it was therefore impossible Chatterton could see previous to the publication of his memoirs; such is also the time of Canynge's entering into Holy Orders, which is confirmed by the Episcopal register of Worcester; and the anecdote of the steeple of Redcliffe church being burnt down by lightning in 1446. Of a familiar kind is a circumstance in the orthography of the name *Fescampe*, (which is the right orthography,) while Holingshead, the only author accessible to Chatterton, has it *Flischampe*. The name of Robert Consul also, whom Rowley represents as having repaired the castle of Bristol,

Bristol, occurs in Leland, as the proprietor of that Castle*.

II. With regard to the STYLE, COMPOSITION, and SENTIMENT. If the poems appear superior to the efforts of the first scholars at the revival of letters; what are they, when considered as the productions of an uneducated charity boy, not quite seventeen? Those also who think that Chatterton could not reduce his genius to the standard of the age of Rowley, should, perhaps, rather wonder why he could never raise his own avowed productions to an equal degree of excellence†. The poems attributed to Rowley, if his, are as much the work of his infantine years, as his own miscellaneous poems; indeed,

* See Bryant's Observations, p. 314, 326, 343, &c.

† The most essential difference that strikes me between the poems of Rowley and Chatterton is, that the former are always built upon some consistent interesting plot, and are more *uniformly* excellent in the execution; the latter are irregular sallies upon ill-selected or trifling subjects.

indeed, many of the latter were composed some time after most of Rowley's were exhibited to the world ; that they should be inferior in every excellence of poetry, is therefore a mystery not easy to be accounted for. Against the general proposition, that poetry like other arts is progressive, and never arrived to perfection in an early age ; it has been judiciously urged, that " Genius is peculiar neither to *age* nor country," but that we have an example of one man (Homer), who in the very infancy of all arts, without guide or precursor, " gave to the world a work, which has been the admiration and model of all succeeding poets †." And though it be admitted, that Rowley's poems are pervaded by an uniform strain of excellence and taste, which does not appear in the other works of his age now extant, yet
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* Matthias's Essay, p. 98.

when we compare any composition with another of the same or of any prior age, the difference subsisting, will frequently be found not to depend upon *time*, but upon the situation, genius and judgment of the respective authors †.

III. As to METRE, it is said, that in all languages the modes and measures of verse were originally invented and adopted from accidental circumstances, and agreeably to the taste of different authors; and that very early in the English poetry, a great variety of measures are known to have prevailed, such is the octave stanza, which is not many removes from the usual stanza of Rowley, the seven lined stanza, or Rithm Royal, and that of ten lines used by Chaucer in one of his smaller poems. The argument founded on the smoothness of the verse, is attempted to be overturned by Mr. Bryant,

• Matthias's Essay, p. 72.

Bryant, who has produced extracts from poems still older than the age of Rowley, which are deficient neither in harmony nor cadence *.

IV. The objection founded on the ancient LANGUAGE of Rowley, is answered by supposing that his language was probably provincial †. Several of the words objected to as of Chatterton's coining, have by more profound researches been traced in ancient writers. Many words in Rowley's poems cannot be found in those dictionaries and glossaries, to which Chatterton had access ‡, and Chatterton's mistakes in transcribing and explaining the old language of Rowley, have already been instanced.

V. Many of the pretended IMITATIONS of THE MODERN poets to be found

* Observations, p. 425, &c. 552.

† Ibid, p. 1, to 25.

‡ Matthias's Essay, p. 77.

found in Rowley, are objected to upon good grounds, as being ideas obvious to Rowley or any man; and as to the others, why may we not suppose them, “insertions of Chatterton, either to please his own ear, or to restore some parts which were lost, or in places where the words were difficult to be decypered*?” This argument acquires great weight, when the temper and genius of Chatterton is considered, and when it is recollected that all parties agree in the probability of many interpolations being made by him; and if this argument be admitted, it will in a great measure account for the modern phrasology which so frequently occurs in these poems.

In rejoinder to these arguments, a few facts have been stated by those who support

* Matthias's Essay, p. 105.

port the title of Chatterton. 1st. That no writings or chest deposited in Redcliffe church are mentioned in Mr. Canynge's will, which has been carefully inspected, nor any books except two, called "*Liggers cum integra legenda*," which he leaves to be used occasionally in the choir by the two chaplains established by him*. 2d. To account for Chatterton's extensive acquaintance with old books out of the common line of reading, it is alledged that the old library at Bristol was, during his life time, of universal access, and Chatterton was actually introduced to it by the Rev. Mr. Catcott†. 3d. Chatterton's account of Canynge, &c. as far as it is countenanced by William of Worcestre, (that is, as far as respects his taking orders and paying a fine to the king) may be found in the epitaph on Master Canynge, still remaining to be read by every person, both in
Latin

* Tywrhitt's Vindication, p. 117.

† Warton's Inquiry, p. 111.

Latin and English, in Redcliffe church, which indeed appears to be the authority, that William of Worcestre himself has followed. Chatterton's account also of Redcliffe steeple, is to be found at the bottom of a print of that church, published in 1746, by one John Halfpenny, "in which was recounted the ruin of the steeple in 1446, by a tempest and fire*." 4th. As to the old vellum or parchment on which Chatterton transcribed his fragments, it is observed, that "at the bottom of each sheet of old deeds, (of which there were many in the Bristol chest) there is usually a blank space of about four or five inches in breadth;" and this exactly agrees with the shape and size of the largest fragment which he has exhibited, viz. Eight and a half inches long, and four and a-half broad †.

* Tywrhitt's Vindication, p. 113, 212.

† Cursory Observations, p. 29.

THUS

THUS I have exhibited as faithfully as I was able, an abstract of the arguments on both sides of this curious literary question. To the examination I sat down with a sceptical mind; nor can I recollect being influenced during the progress of the inquiry in a single instance, by the authority of names, by the force of ridicule, or the partialities of friendship. Some remarks, I believe, I may have added, which are not to be found in other books; in this, however, I am not conscious of having favoured one party more than the other, but esteemed it a part of my duty to state the observations as they rose in my mind from a consideration of the facts. I shall not intrude upon my readers any verdict of my own concerning the issue of the controversy; since my only intention was to enable them, from a view of the arguments, to form their own conclusions; leaving them still open to the

the impression of any additional or more satisfactory evidence that may hereafter arise. I cannot, however, lay aside my pen without one general reflection. It is impossible to peruse the state of this controversy, without smiling at the folly and vanity of posthumous fame. The author of these poems, whoever he was, certainly never flattered himself with the expectation that they would ever excite half the curiosity, or half the admiration which they have excited in the literary world. If they really be the productions of Rowley, one of the first, both in order and in merit of our English poets, is defrauded of more than half his reputation; if they be the works of Chatterton, they neither served to raise him in the opinion of his intimate acquaintance and friends, nor to procure for him the comforts or even the necessities of life. He has descended to his grave with a dubious character;

rafter ; and the only praise which can be accorded him by the warmest of his admirers, is that of an elegant and ingenious impostor.

For the satisfaction of those readers, who may wish to review the whole controversy at large, and for the information of posterity, I subjoin the most accurate list I have been able to procure of all the publications which have appeared on both sides.

A List of the various Publications upon the Subject of ROWLEY'S POEMS, *for* and *against* their *Authenticity*.

EDITIONS OF ROWLEY.

POEMS, supposed to have been written at Bristol by Thomas Rowley, and others, in the Fifteenth Century ; the greatest Part now first published from the most authentic Copies, with an engraved Specimen of one of the MS. To which are added, a Preface, an Introductory Account of the several Pieces, and a Glossary. Ed. 8vo. 1777.

N. B. This Edition has been reprinted.

Ditto: with a Commentary, in which the Antiquity of them is considered and defended, by Jeremiah Milles, D. D. Dean of Exeter. Ed. 4to. 1782.

THE

THE EIGHTH Section of Mr. Warton's Second Volume of the History of English Poetry, with the Notes to it.

REMARKS on the Eighth Section of Mr. Warton's Second Volume of the History of English Poetry.

Payne, Mews-Gate.

TWO Letters by the Hon. Mr. Horace Walpole; printed at Strawberry-hill.—Reprinted, (by his permission) in the Gentleman's Magazines for April, May, June, July, 1782.

APPENDIX, containing some Observations upon the Language of the Poems attributed to Rowley, tending to prove, that they were written not by any ancient Author, but entirely by Thomas Chatterton. *Payne, Mews-Gate.*

N. B. This Appendix is *now* generally annexed to the 8vo. Edition of Rowley's Poems.

OBSERVATIONS on the Poems attributed to Rowley, tending to prove, that they were really written by Him and other Ancient Authors. To which are added, Remarks on the Appendix of the Editor (of the 8vo. Ed.) of Rowley's Poems. *Bathurst, Fleet-Street.*

OBSERVATIONS upon the Poems of Thomas Rowley; in which the Authenticity of those Poems is ascertained. By Jacob Bryant, Esq. *Payne, Mews-Gate, &c.*

CURSORY Observations on the Poems attributed to Thomas Rowley, a Priest in the fifteenth Century: with some Remarks on the Commentaries on these Poems, by the Reverend Dr. Jeremiah Milles, Dean of Exeter, and Jacob Bryant, Esq. *Nichols and Walter, Charing-cross.*

AN ENQUIRY into the Authenticity of the Poems attributed to Thomas Rowley, in which the Arguments of the

Dean of Exeter and Mr. Bryant are examined. By Thomas Warton, Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, and F. S. A.
Dodfley, Pall-Mall.

STRICTURES upon a Pamphlet entitled, "Curfory Observations on the Poems attributed to Rowley, a Priest in the Fifteenth Century." With a Postscript on Mr. Thomas Warton's Enquiry into the same Subject. By E. B. Greene, Esq.
Stockdale, Piccadilly.

A VINDICATION of the APPENDIX to the Poems called Rowley's: In Reply to the Answers of the Dean of Exeter, Jacob Bryant Esq. and a third anonymous Writer; with some further observations upon those Poems, and an Examination of the Evidence which has been produced in Support of their Authenticity. By Thomas Tyrwhitt.
Payne, Mew's-Gate.

AN ESSAY on the Evidence, External and Internal, relating to the Poems attributed to Thomas Rowley and others, in the Fifteenth Century, containing a general View of the whole Controversy. By Thomas James Mathias.
Becket, Pall Mall.

To which may be added various shorter Compositions on the Subject (too numerous to specify) inserted in the different monthly Magazines.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

*The following Poem was copied from a manuscript
of CHATTERTON, and the Editor believes has
never before been presented to the Public.*

The ART of PUFFING,

By a BOOKSELLER's JOURNEYMAN.

VERS'D by experience in the subtle art,
The myst'ries of a title I impart :
Teach the young author how to please the town ;
And make the heavy drug of rhyme go down.
Since Curl, immortal, never dying name,
A double pica in the book of fame,
By various arts did various dunces prop,
And tickled every fancy to his shop :
Who can like Pottinger ensure a book ?
Who judges with the solid taste of Cooke ?
Villains exalted in the midway sky,
Shall live again, to drain your purses dry :
Nor yet unrivall'd they ; see Baldwin comes,
Rich in inventions, patents, cuts and hums :
The honorable Boswell writes, 'tis true,
What else can Paoli's supporter do ?

The trading wits endeavour to attain,
Like booksellers, the world's first idol—gain :
For this they puff the heavy Goldsmith's line,
And hail his sentiment tho' trite, divine ;
For this, the patriotic bard complains,
And Bingley binds poor liberty in chains :
For this was every reader's faith deceiv'd,
And Edmund swore what nobody believ'd :
For this the wits in close disguises fight ;
For this the varying politicians write ;
For this each month new magazines are sold,
With dullness fill'd and transcripts of the old.
The Town and Country struck a lucky hit,
Was novel, sentimental, full of wit :
Apeing her walk, the same success to find,
The Court and City hobbles far behind :
Sons of Apollo learn, merit's no more
Than a good frontispiece to grace her door ;
The author who invents a title well,
Will always find his cover'd dullness sell ;
Flexney and every bookseller will buy,—
Bound in neat calf, the work will never die.

V A M P.

July 22, 1770.

LETTERS

L E T T E R S
O F
THOMAS CHATTERTON.

L E T T E R I.

London, April 26, 1770.

Dear Mother,

HERE I am, safe, and in high spirits
—To give you a journal of my tour
would not be unnecessary. After riding
in the basket to Brislington, I mounted
the top of the coach, and rid easy; and
agreeably entertained with the conversa-
tion of a quaker *in dress*, but little so in
personals and behaviour. This laughing
friend, who is a carver, lamented his
having sent his tools to Worcester, as
otherwise he would have accompanied me

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to

to London. I left him at Bath; when, finding it rained pretty fast, I entered an inside passenger to Speenhamland, the half-way stage, paying seven shillings. 'Twas lucky I did so, for it snowed all night, and on Marlborough Downs the snow was near a foot high.

At seven in the morning I breakfasted at Speenhamland, and then mounted the coach-box for the remainder of the day, which was a remarkable fine one.—Honest gee-ho complimented me with assuring me, that I sat bolder and tighter than any person who ever rid with him.—Dined at Stroud most luxuriantly, with a young gentleman who had slept all the preceding night in the machine; and an old mercantile genius, whose school-boy son had a great deal of wit, as the father thought, in remarking that Windsor was as old as *our Saviour's time*.

Got

Got into London about five o'clock in the evening—called upon Mr. Edmunds, Mr. Fell, Mr. Hamilton, and Mr. Dodfley. Great encouragement from them; all approved of my design;—shall soon be settled. — Call upon Mr. Lambert; shew him this, or tell him, if I deserve a recommendation, he would oblige me to give me one—if I do not, it will be beneath him to take notice of me. Seen all aunts, cousins—all well—and I am welcome. Mr. T. Wensley is alive, and coming home.— Sister, grandmother, &c. &c. &c. remember.— I remain,

Your dutiful son,

T. Chatterton.

LETTER

L E T T E R II.

Shoreditch, London, May 6, 1770.

Dear Mother,

I am surpris'd that no letter has been sent in answer to my last. I am settled, and in such a settlement as I would desire. I get four guineas a month by one Magazine: shall engage to write a History of England, and other pieces, which will more than double that sum. Occasional essays for the daily papers would more than support me. What a glorious prospect! Mr. Wilkes knew me by my writings since I first corresponded with the booksellers here. I shall visit him next week, and by his interest will insure Mrs. Ballance the Trinity-House. He affirmed that what Mr. Fell had of mine could not be the writings of a youth; and expressed a desire to know the author. By the means of another
bookseller

bookfeller I shall be introduced to Townshend and Sawbridge. I am quite familiar at the Chapter Coffee-house, and know all the geniuses there. A character is now unnecessary; an author carries his character in his pen. My sister will improve herself in drawing. My grandmother is, I hope, well. Bristol's mercenary walls were never destined to hold me—there, I was out of my element; now, I am in it—London! Good God! how superior is London to that despicable place Bristol!—Here is none of your little meannesses, none of your mercenary securities, which disgrace that miserable hamlet.—Dress, which is in Bristol an eternal fund of scandal, is here only introduced as a subject of praise; if a man dresses well, he has taste; if careless, he has his own reasons for so doing, and is prudent. Need I remind you of the contrast? The poverty of authors is a
common

common observation, but not always a true one. No author can be poor who understands the arts of booksellers—Without this necessary knowledge, the greatest genius may starve; and, with it, the greatest dunce live in splendor. This knowledge I have pretty well dipped into.—The Levant man of war, in which T. Wensley went out, is at Portsmouth; but no news from him yet.—I lodge in one of Mr. Walmfley's best rooms. Let Mr. Cary copy the letters on the other side, and give them to the persons for whom they are designed, if not too much labour for him.

I remain, yours, &c.

T. Chatterton.

P. S. I have some trifling presents for my mother, sister Thorne, &c.

Sunday morning,

For

For Mr. T. CARY.

I have sent you a task. I hope no unpleasing one. Tell all your acquaintance for the future to read the Freeholder's Magazine. When you have any thing for publication, send it to me, and it shall most certainly appear in some periodical compilation. Your last piece was, by the ignorance of a corrector, jumbled under the considerations in the acknowledgements. But I rescued it, and insisted on its appearance.

Your friend,

T. C.

Direct for me, to be left at the Chapter Coffee-house, Pater-noster-row.

Mr. HENRY KATOR.

If you have not forgot Lady Betty, any Complaint, Rebus, or Enigma, on the dear charmer, directed for me, to be left at
the

the Chapter Coffee-house, Pater-noster-row—shall find a place in some Magazine, or other ; as I am engaged in many.

Your friend,

T. Chatterton.

Mr. WILLIAM SMITH.

When you have any poetry for publication, send it to me, to be left at the Chapter Coffee-house, Pater-noster-row, and it shall most certainly appear.

Your friend,

T. C.

Mrs. BAKER.

The sooner I see you the better—send me as soon as possible Rymfdyk's address. (Mr. Cary will leave this at Mr. Flower's, Small-street.)

Mr. MASON.

Give me a short prose description of the situation of Nash—and the poetic addition shall

shall appear in some Magazine. Send me also whatever you would have published, and direct for me, to be left at the Chapter Coffee-house, Pater-noster-row.

Your friend,

T. Chatterton.

Mr. MAT. MEASE.

Begging Mr. Mease's pardon for making public use of his name lately—I hope he will remember me, and tell all his acquaintance to read the Freeholder's Magazine for the future.

T. Chatterton.

T E L L —

Mr. Thaire	Mr. Rudhall	Mr. Ward
Mr. Gaster	Mr. Thomas	Mr. Kalo
Mr. A. Broughton	Mr. Carty	Mr. Smith
Mr. J. Broughton	Mr. Hanmor	&c. &c.
Mr. Williams	Mr. Vaughan	

to read the Freeholder's Magazine.

L E T T E R

L E T T E R III.

King's Bench, for the present, May 14, 1770.

Dear Madam,

Don't be surprized at the name of the place. I am not here as a prisoner. Matters go on swimmingly : Mr. Fell having offended certain persons, they have set his creditors upon him, and he is safe in the King's Bench. I have been bettered by this accident : His successors in the Freeholder's Magazine, knowing nothing of the matter, will be glad to engage me, on my own terms. Mr. Edmunds has been tried before the House of Lords, sentenced to pay a fine, and thrown into Newgate. His misfortunes will be to me of no little service. Last week, being in the pit of Drury Lane, Theatre, I contracted an immediate acquaintance (which you know is no hard task to me) with a young gentleman

man in Cheapſide; partner in a muſic ſhop, the greateſt in the city. Hearing I could write, he deſired me to write a few ſongs for him: this I did the ſame night, and conveyed them to him the next morning. Theſe he ſhewed to a Doctor in Muſic, and I am invited to treat with this Doctor, on the footing of a compoſer, for Ranelagh and the Gardens. *Bravo, hey boys, up we go!* — Beſides the advantage of viſiting theſe expenſive and polite places gratis; my vanity will be fed with the ſight of my name in copper-plate, and my ſiſter will receive a bundle of printed ſongs, the words by her brother. Theſe are not all my acquiſitions: a gentleman who knows me at the Chapter, as an author, would have introduced me as a companion to the young Duke of Northumberland, in his intended general tour. But, alas! I ſpeak no tongue but my own! — But to return once more to a place I am

R

ſickened

fickened to write of, Bristol. Though, as an apprentice, none had greater liberties, yet the thoughts of servitude killed me : now I have that for my labour, I always reckoned the first of my pleasures, and have still, my liberty. As to the clearance, I am ever ready to give it ; but really I understand so little of the law, that I believe Mr. Lambert must draw it. Mrs. L. brought what you mention. Mrs. Hughes is as well as age will permit her to be, and my cousin does very well.

I will get some patterns worth your acceptance ; and wish you and my sister would improve yourselves in drawing, as it is here a valuable and never-failing acquisition.—My box shall be attended to ; I hope my books are in it—if not, send them ; and particularly Catcott's Hutchinsonian jargon on the Deluge, and the M.S. Glossary, composed of one small book, annexed to a larger.—My
sister

sister will remember me to Miss Sandford. I have not quite forgot her ; though there are so many pretty milleners, &c. that I have almost forgot myself.—Carty will think on me : upon inquiry, I find his trade dwindled into nothing here. A man may very nobly starve by it ; but he must have luck indeed, who can live by it.—Miss Rumsey, if she comes to London, would do well, as an old acquaintance, to send me her address.—London is not Bristol—We may patrol the town for a day, without raising one whisper, or nod of scandal.—If she refuses, the curse of all antiquated virgins light on her : may she be refused, when she shall request ! Miss Rumsey will tell Miss Baker, and Miss Baker will tell Miss Porter, that Miss Porter's favoured humble servant, though but a *young* man, is a very old lover ; and in the eight-and-fiftieth year of his age : but that, as Lap-

pet says, is the flower of a man's days; and when a lady can't get a young husband, she must put up with an old bed-fellow. I left Miss Singer, I am sorry to say it, in a very bad way; that is, in a way to be married.—But mum—Ask Miss Suky Webb the rest; if she knows, she'll tell ye.—I beg her pardon for revealing the secret; but when the knot is fastened, she shall know how I came by it.—Miss Thatcher may depend upon it, that, if I am not in love with her, I am in love with nobody else: I hope she is well; and if that whining, sighing, dying pulpit-fop, Lewis, has not finished his languishing lectures, I hope she will see her amorofo next Sunday.—If Miss Love has no objection to having a crambo song on her name published, it shall be done.—Begging pardon of Miss Cotton for whatever has happened to offend her, I can assure her it has happened without
my

my consent. I did not give her this assurance when in Bristol, lest it should seem like an attempt to avoid the anger of her *furious* brother. Inquire, when you can, how Miss Broughton received her billet. Let my sister send me a journal of all the transactions of the females within the circle of your acquaintance. Let Miss Watkins know, that the letter she made herself ridiculous by, was never intended for her; but another young lady in the neighbourhood, of the same name. I promised, before my departure, to write to some hundreds, I believe; but, what with writing for publications, and going to places of public diversion, which is as absolutely necessary to me as food, I find but little time to write to you. As to Mr. Barrett, Mr. Catcott, Mr. Burgum, &c. &c. they rate literary lumber so low, that I believe an author, in their estimation, must be poor indeed! But

here matters are otherwise; had Rowley been a Londoner, instead of a Bristowyan, I could have lived by copying his works. — In my humble opinion, I am under very few obligations to any persons in Bristol: one, indeed, has obliged me; but, as most do, in a manner which makes his obligation no obligation. — My youthful acquaintances will not take it in dudgeon, that I do not write oftener to them, than I believe I shall: but, as I had the happy art of pleasing in conversation, my company was often liked, where I did not like: and to continue a correspondence under such circumstances, would be ridiculous. Let my sister improve in copying music, drawing, and every thing which requires genius: in Bristol's mercantile style those things may be useless, if not a detriment to her; but here they are highly profitable. — Inform Mr. Rhife that nothing shall be wanting, on my
part,

part, in the business he was so kind as to employ me in; should be glad of a line from him, to know whether he would engage in the marine department; or spend the rest of his days, safe, on dry ground.—Intended waiting on the Duke of Bedford relative to the Trinity-House; but his Grace is dangerously ill. My grandmother, I hope, enjoys the state of health I left her in. I am Miss Webb's humble servant. Thorne shall not be forgot, when I remit the small trifles to you. Notwithstanding Mrs. B's not being able to inform me of Mr. Garfed's address, through the closeness of the pious Mr. Ewer, I luckily stumbled upon it this morning.

I remain, &c. &c. &c. &c.

Monday Evening.

Thomas Chatterton.

(Direct for me, at Mr. Walmfley's, at Shoreditch—only.)

L E T T E R IV.

Tom's Coffee-house, London, May 30, 1770.

Dear Sister,

There is such a noise of business and politicks in the room, that my inaccuracy in writing here, is highly excusable. My present profession obliges me to frequent places of the best resort. To begin with, what every female conversation begins with, dress: I employ my money now in fitting myself fashionably, and getting into good company; this last article always brings me in interest. But I have engaged to live with a gentleman, the brother of a Lord (a Scotch one indeed), who is going to advance pretty deeply into the bookselling branches: I shall have lodging and boarding, genteel and elegant, gratis: this article, in the quarter of the town he lives, with worse accommodations, would be 50l. per annum.

I shall

I shall have, likewise, no inconsiderable premium; and assure yourself every month shall end to your advantage: I will send you two silks this summer; and expect, in answer to this, what colours you prefer. My mother shall not be forgotten. My employment will be writing a voluminous History of London, to appear in numbers the beginning of the next winter. As this will not, like writing political essays, oblige me to go to the coffee-house, I shall be able to serve you the more by it: but it will necessitate me to go to Oxford, Cambridge, Lincoln, Coventry, and every collegiate church near; not at all disagreeable journeys, and not to me expensive. The Manuscript Glossary, I mentioned in my last, must not be omitted. If money flowed as fast upon me as honours, I would give you a portion of 5000*l*. You have, doubtless, heard of the Lord Mayor's remonstrating
and

and addressing the King: but it will be a piece of news, to inform you that I have been with the Lord Mayor on the occasion. Having addressed an essay to his Lordship, it was very well received; perhaps better than it deserved; and I waited on his Lordship, to have his approbation, to address a second letter to him, on the subject of the remonstrance, and its reception. His Lordship received me as politely as a citizen could; and warmly invited me to call on him again. The rest is a secret——But the devil of the matter is, there's no money to be got of this side the question. Interest is of the other side. But he is a poor author, who cannot write on both sides. I believe I may be introduced (and, if I am not, I'll introduce myself) to a ruling power in the Court party. I might have a recommendation to Sir George Colebrook, an East-India Director, as qualified

fied for an office no ways despicable; but I shall not take a step to the sea, whilst I can continue on land. I went yesterday to Woolwich, to see Mr. Wensley; he is paid to-day. The artillery is no unpleasant sight, if we bar reflection, and do not consider how much mischief it may do. Greenwich Hospital and St. Paul's Cathedral are the only structures which could reconcile me to any thing out of the Gothic. Mr. Carty will hear from me soon: multiplicity of literary business must be my excuse.—I condole with him, and my dear Miss Sandford, in the misfortune of Mrs. Carty: my physical advice is, to leech her temples plentifully: keep her very low in diet; as much in the dark as possible. Nor is this last prescription the whim of an old woman: whatever hurts the eyes, affects the brain: and the particles of light,
when

when the sun is in the summer signs, are highly prejudicial to the eyes; and it is from this sympathetic effect, that the head-ach is general in summer. But, above all, talk to her but little, and never contradict her in any thing. This may be of service. I hope it will. Did a paragraph appear in your paper of Saturday last, mentioning the inhabitants of London's having opened another view of St. Paul's; and advising the corporation, or vestry of Redclift, to procure a more compleat view of Redclift church? My compliments to Miss Thatcher: if I am in love, I am; though the devil take me, if I can tell with whom it is. I believe I may address her in the words of Scripture, which no doubt she reveres; "If you had not ploughed with my heifer" (or bullock rather), "you had not found out my riddle." Humbly thanking Miss
Rumsey

Rumsey for her complimentary expression, I cannot think it satisfactory. Does she, or does she not, intend coming to London? Mrs. O'Coffin has not yet got a place; but there is not the least doubt but she will in a little time.

Essay-writing has this advantage, you are sure of constant pay; and when you have once wrote a piece which makes the author enquired after, you may bring the bookfellers to your own terms. Essays on the patriotic side fetch no more than what the copy is sold for. As the patriots themselves are searching for a place, they have no gratuities to spare. So says one of the beggars, in a temporary alteration of mine, in the Jovial Crew:

A patriot was my occupation,
It got me a name but no pelf:
Till, starv'd for the good of the nation,
I begg'd for the good of myself.
Fal, lal, &c.

I told

I told them, if 'twas not for me,
Their freedoms would all go to pot;
I promis'd to set them all free,
But never a farthing I got.
Fal, lal, &c.

—On the other hand, unpopular essays will not even be accepted; and you must pay to have them printed: but then you seldom lose by it. Courtiers are so sensible of their deficiency in merit, that they generally reward all who know how to daub them with an appearance of it. To return to private affairs — Friend Slude may depend upon my endeavouring to find the publications you mention. They publish the Gospel Magazine here. For a whim I write in it. I believe there are not any sent to Bristol; they are hardly worth the carriage — methodistical, and unmeaning. With the usual ceremonies to my mother, and grandmother; and sincerely, without ceremony, wishing them both

both happy ; when it is in my power to make them so, they shall be so; and with my kind remembrance to Miss Webb, and Miss Thorne; I remain, as I ever was,

Yours, &c. to the end of the chapter,

Thomas Chatterton.

P. S. I am this minute pierced through the heart by the black eye of a young lady, driving along in a Hackney-coach. — I am quite in love : if my love lasts till that time, you shall hear of it in my next.

L E T T E R V.

June 19, 1770.

Dear Sister,

I have an horrid cold — The relation of the manner of my catching it may give you more pleasure than the circumstance itself. As I wrote very late Sunday night

night (or rather very early Monday morning), I thought to have gone to bed pretty soon last night: when, being half undressed, I heard a very doleful voice, singing Miss Hill's favorite bedlamite song. The hum-drum of the voice so struck me, that though I was obliged to listen a long while before I could hear the words, I found the similitude in the sound. After hearing her with pleasure drawl for above half an hour, she jumped into a brisker tune, and hobbled out the ever-famous song, in which poor Jack Fowler was to have been satirized.—

“ I put my hand into a bush: I prick'd
“ my finger to the bone: I saw a ship
“ sailing along: I thought the sweetest
“ flowers to find:” and other pretty flowery expressions, were twanged with no inharmonious bray.—I now ran to the window, and threw up the sash; resolved to be satisfied, whether or no it

was

was the identical Miss Hill, *in propria persona*.——But, alas! it was a person whose twang is very well known, when she is awake, but who had drank so much royal bob (the gingerbread-baker for that, you know), that she was now singing herself asleep. This somnifying liquor had made her voice so like the sweet echo of Miss Hill's, that if I had not considered that she could not see her way up to London, I should absolutely have imagined it hers —— There was a fellow and a girl in one corner, more busy in attending to their own affairs, than the melody.

This part of the letter, for some lines, is not legible.

. the morning) from Marybone gardens; I saw the fellow in the cage at the watch-house, in the parish of St. Giles; and the nymph is an inhabitant of one of Cupid's inns of Court.——There was one similitude it would be injustice

to let slip. A drunken fishman, who sells soufe mackarel, and other delicious dainties, to the eternal detriment of all two-penny ordinaries; as his best commodity, his salmon, goes off at three halfpence the piece: this itinerant merchant, this moveable fish-stall, having likewise had his dose of bob-royal, stood still for a while; and then joined chorus, in a tone which would have laid half a dozen lawyers, pleading for their fees, fast asleep: this naturally reminded me of Mr. Haythorne's song of

“ Says Plato, who oy oy should man be vain?”

However, my entertainment, though sweet enough in itself has a dish of four sauce served up in it; for I have a most horrible wheezing in the throat: but I don't repent that I have this cold; for there are so many nostrums here, that 'tis worth a man's while to get a distemper, he can be cured so cheap.

June 29th, 1770.

My

My cold is over and gone. If the above did not recall to your mind some scenes of laughter, you have lost your ideas of risibility.

L E T T E R VI.*

Dear Mother,

I send you in the box—six cups and saucers with two basons, for my sister—If a china tea pot and cream pot, is in your opinion, necessary, I will send them, but I am informed they are unfashionable, and that the red china, which you are provided with, is more in use—a cargo of patterns, for yourself, with a snuff box, right French and very curious in my opinion.

S 2

Two

* Chatterton had probably changed his lodging a little before he wrote this letter. It is a remarkable passage where he says, he wishes she had sent him up his red pocket book, “as ’tis very material.” “More graver,” in the 13th line, confirms Mr. Bryant’s opinion, p. 481, “that he was not well grounded in the first principles of Grammar.”

Two fans—the silver one, is more graver than the other, which would suit my sister best——But that I leave to you both.

Some British herb snuff, in the box; be careful how you open it—(This I omit lest it injure the other matters)

Some British herb tobacco for my grandmother, some trifles for Thorne. Be assured whenever I have the power, my will won't be wanting to testify, that I remember you——

Yours,

July 8, 1770.

T. Chatterton.

N. B.—I shall forestall your intended journey, and pop down upon you at Christmas——

I could have wished, you had sent my red pocket book, as 'tis very material

I bought two very curious twisted pipes for my grandmother; but both breaking; I was afraid to buy others lest they should
break

break in the box; and being loose, injure the china. Have you heard any thing further of the clearance——

Direct for me at Mrs. Angels', Sack-maker, Brooke Street, Holborn.

“Mrs. Chatterton.”

L E T T E R VII.

Dear Sister,

I have sent you some china and a fan. You have your choice of two. I am surprised that you chose purple and gold. I went into the shop to buy it; but it is the most disagreeable colour I ever saw—dead, lifeless, and inelegant. Purple and pink, or lemon and pink, are more genteel and lively. Your answer in this affair will oblige me. Be assured, that I shall ever make your wants, my wants; and stretch to the utmost to serve you. Remember me to Miss Sandford, Miss Rumsey, Miss Singer, &c. &c. &c.

As

As to the songs, I have waited this week for them, and have not had time to copy one perfectly: when the season's over, you will have 'em all in print. I had pieces last month in the following Magazines:

Gospel Magazine,

Town and Country, viz.

Maria Friendless.

False Step.

Hunter of Oddities,

To Miss Bush, &c.

Court and City. London. Political Register, &c. &c.

The Christian Magazine, as they are not to be had perfect, are not worth buying—I remain,

Yours,

T. Chatterton.

July 11, 1770.

LET-

L E T T E R VIII.

I am now about an Oratorio, which, when finished, will purchase you a gown. You may be certain of seeing me before the 1st of January, 1771.—The clearance is immaterial.—My mother may expect more patterns.—Almost all the next Town and Country Magazine is mine. I have an universal acquaintance:—my company is courted every where; and, could I humble myself to go into a compter, could have had twenty places before now:—but I must be among the great; state matters suit me better than commercial. The ladies are not out of my acquaintance. I have a deal of business now, and must therefore bid you adieu. You will have a longer letter from me soon—and more to the purpose.

Yours,

T. C.

20th July, 1770.

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